

Falling in Love with the Villainess

– Akuyaku Reijo Ni Koi Wo Shite –

**- Volume 1 -
Prologue**

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- STORY -

When he regained consciousness he was already in another world. There was no meeting with a God, no cheat skills, just a sudden reincarnation. There was no time to find his bearings either, he was in a life-or-death trouble from the start that would somehow result in being employed as a valet to a vain youngster from an aristocratic family.

He would, in time, discover an astonishing truth about this new world and vow to fight it with all his might to protect the people important to him. No matter how reckless that would be.

Chapter 1

Suddenly Committing Murder Is Too Heavy!

When I woke up, there were numerous stars flickering in the night sky in front of my eyes.

It was my first time seeing a night sky this beautiful ever since I was born – that impression vanished in just a moment.

Heavy stench the source of which I had no idea was drifting afloat in my surroundings.

Though I was able to move away by bearing with it, what struck me next was the pain, that ran through my whole body. I groaned while tumbling on the ground but by doing so, the situation has just worsened.

Gritting my teeth, I put up with the pain.

Though it didn't completely diminish, the pain has calmed a little bit. Regaining my composure and checking the state of my body, it seemed the pain didn't come from wounds but rather from something like bruises.

How did things end up this way–?

Though being drunk and picking up fights had come to mind, I had no memory of drinking any sake at all. The only thing I clearly remembered was going straight home and riding the bus from the nearest station. And–

“Oy. Until when do you plan to ignore me?”

Suddenly hearing that voice, my line of thought got cut off.

Thinking about who it was I inclined my head towards where the voice came from. In that moment I forgot about the pain.

The voice came from a Caucasian boy with a slightly flushed face, blonde hair and green eyes. Though it might have sounded like the person was a cute boy, he was

plump or rather carrying enough weight to become chubby. As he was staring towards me with a cheeky expression, the word “cute” never came to my mind.

Not just that, his outfit was a shirt with a lot of frills and a red necktie. Above the white tights, he was wearing navy blue pants, dressing just like the idiotic nobles coming straight from comics.

“You are?”

“You? Where’s your honorifics? How insolent!”

Even his rebuttal was as expected. My mind was all the more thrown into chaos.

“Well fine, I finally meet someone who listens. Let’s ignore the insolence.”

The boy with whom I’d normally never associate myself said those incomprehensible words, but just as he said, he was the only person I could talk to. I couldn’t afford to drive him away.

“Where is this place?”

With the boy’s question, the thought “that’s what I wanted to know” came to mind but-

“The outskirts of the slum area.”

What came out of my mouth was a totally different phrase.

“Slums... No good!*

The face of the boy instantly turned pale, visible even though it was a bit dim. This response was just like when someone is lost, however, what concerned me the most was where was this slum area.

The answer to that was — the northern outskirts of the Grand Flamm Kingdom capital city.

Though I had never heard of such a country, for some reason the name suddenly floated in my mind.

Something was strange. My face that had seemingly drained of blood was just the same color as the boy's.

"Hey, you. I want to go to the main streets. Can you guide me?"

"I can, but... I can't."

This time, the answer that floated in my mind was what my mouth uttered.

I had knowledge of things that I don't really know. Though these words have also struck my mind, I didn't even know their meaning.

"What do you mean by you can, but can't!? If it's a reward, I can give you one!"

With the way, the boy was talking, as if in a hurry, my train of thought was suspended. For starters, I had to find a way to deal with this situation.

"...I'm injured so I can't move."

"Injured? I see. Wait a bit."

Though I thought he would call for help, that expectation was betrayed as the boy started to move from his position. With a serious expression, he began to chant words.

"I shall bestow healing magic upon thee."

Those were the words that I heard while listening carefully.

"Blessed wind, come and Heal!"

A little bit after the words of the boy, my whole body was suddenly caressed by the wind.

Just a small breeze. Though it was only a small amount, it was indeed the wind. Understanding the meaning behind the actions of the boy, I was astonished.

"How is it?"

The boy asked in high spirits. If it was about whether the injury had healed, then there was no mistake.

I tried to move my body cautiously.

“Kuh...”

My voice unintentionally leaked out. Though my mind had become calmer, the injury did not dissipate.

“I’m still just a child. When I grow up I will be able to do better.”

He must have had figured it out from my response. Although the boy made excuses, there was no mistake, the boy tried to heal my injury with magic.

“The pain has lessened. If it’s just walking, then I can do it.”

“I-Is that so? Then guide me.”

Rather than for the boy’s sake, I also wanted to hurry up and get out of this obviously dangerous place, so finally being able to move my body albeit still riddled with pain, I decided to get out of here.

Though it was indeed painful, it’s not as if I couldn’t move with it.

More or less, I understood the effect of the magic that the boy used.

“...This way.”

Again, my mind filled up with information of this place on its own, and though I didn’t know why, for the moment I was grateful for it.

Provided that the information was indeed correct, which I still can’t help but doubt.

Anyway, after being able to go to a safer place, I would have to ascertain my situation either from the boy or someone more knowledgeable.

That was right. That place was dangerous to both me, and the boy.

With the fear within me spontaneously breaking out, my walking pace increased.

However, those footsteps had to be stopped for a certain reason.

“Hey, so you are still alive?”

Said the man who appeared in front of me.

I know this man. My injuries were caused by this man’s violence and not just that, this man had done even worse things to me before.

He had also done things that you normally can’t tell other people about. No matter how I hated him, an existence where just hating is not enough, that was who this person had been to me.

“Well, that doesn’t matter. For now, it’s about the brat behind you.”

Sure enough, his curiosity was pointed towards the boy behind me.

A boy who obviously came from a rich family judging by the way he was dressed. For the people who live in this place, a perfectly suitable prey. Even I to a certain extent, after sending him off, had thought to take his valuables- No, that wasn’t me, but that was what had been occupying my mind.

“You’ll have to hand this brat over. This prey would just be wasted on you.”

If it was me, I would just take his belongings at most. However, when it came to this man, he would threaten the boy’s home in order to obtain the ransom. “Indeed, it would be wasted on me” – Why did such thought even enter my head, I didn’t understand.

“Insolents! Just who do you think am I?”

“Hell if I know! In this place, as long as you have lots of cash, it doesn’t matter who you are!”

“I am Vincent Woodville! I’m a noble of house Windhill!”

“What!?”

As long as one was rich, it didn’t matter who one was. Though that man said so, it had to have limits.

House Windhill to me, or to be exact to the person within me, were a famous

aristocratic family that everyone knew. It was one of the famous three aristocratic families that supported this country, and those who dared to scowl at the three families had no place in this country.

Though such thinking would be normal, that man was different. With a broad grin on his face, he walked towards the boy. Though I already knew that, that man was just hopelessly stupid– with this thought inside me, I was in complete agreement.

“If it’s for the lord’s kid, no matter what kind of demand won’t be a problem. I can mess around for all my life.”

“D-Don’t think of doing something stupid!”

“I’m not stupid!”

No matter how you thought about it, he WAS stupid, wasn’t he? The stupidity of that man didn’t matter. The problem was securing my safety. How would the surrounding people see this situation?

They would probably believe, that I fooled the kid to deliver him to that man.

Supposing that was the case, I could see the ending of my life. Though it was a life of anything goes, dying without doing even a single good thing was getting on my nerves– no that wasn’t it. I didn’t want to die like this.

That thought reverberated through my whole body. As for who I really was back then, somehow it didn’t matter anymore.

“If you behave properly, you won’t experience any pain. As long as they pay the price, you can reunite with your family safe and sound.”

“Is that true?”

It seemed as though the boy was also an idiot. Once you saw the face of the kidnapper, there was no way that you would make it out alive.

Also, if the boy ever came back to his family, the aristocratic house would use its full strength to deliver retribution. There was no mistake, if you got caught, you’d be killed. I couldn’t think of escaping and even if I managed somehow, I didn’t have funds to fully escape that situation.

There was no other choice. I had to resolve myself.

"That's right, so come here obediently."

"...as I thought, I refuse. Take me to my house immediately, and if you do that, I will bestow a sufficient reward on you."

"That's why I said that as long as I get the money, I will send you home, right?"

"B-but..."

This man firstly planned to finish it with a gentle face, so that the boy's apprehensiveness would be soothed. He didn't seem to be conscious of me at all.

Should I do it? No, I had to do it!

There was another person that stayed in my mind, and as his consciousness broke through, my body began to move accordingly.

Slowly without being noticed, I sneaked forward and approached the back of that man. I took out the knife that I was hiding. This was the only weapon I managed to keep in times like those.

All the others were taken by that man several hours ago.

This time, I definitely had to not fail.

The man seized both hands of the boy. Thanks to him squatting, the back of his head was fully exposed right before my eyes. I raised my hand over to strike at the nape of that man's neck with my knife.

But the boy who turned his sight towards me was really an idiot.

Because of his gaze, the man turned his head back and had noticed me.

"You bastard! What are you trying to do!?"

"uwaaa~!"

While I shouted due to the exploding fear within me, my hand swung downwards

towards the face of the man.

“Gu... guah!”

What remained on my hand was an unpleasant sensation, but I had no time to ponder such thoughts.

Pulling out the knife that struck that man’s mouth, I immediately swung it downwards again.

The knife stabbed towards the right eye of the man.

Not yet, I knew, because the man was still shrieking.

“Dieeeeeeeeeeeeee!”

I struck with the knife at his face continuously.

No words came out of the man’s mouth any longer, and he slowly fell forwards.

“Haa... Haa... Ha...”

My breathing hurt, my heart was thumping so hard, that it almost brought pain to my chest.

“Y-You...”

“...Run away.”

“R-Run away you say...”

“Follow me, let’s hurry up and escape!”

“R-right!”

I eagerly ran towards the path that led to the main street. Though I wanted to throw away the bloodstained knife in my hands, because my hand had stiffened, I couldn’t let go. No matter how much I shook my hand, I couldn’t let go of the weapon.

“O-oy, wait! Slow down a little bit.”

The boy shouted from behind my back. Because I couldn't leave him alone, I slowed my pace down, as he said.

For me, the boy was an important source of money. Demanding a reward would let me obtain sufficient amount of funds.

It was capital, that I had to obtain, to get away from the capital.

"Has he died?"

"I don't know."

"You've killed someone, huh?"

"If I didn't do so, I would be the one killed."

"Is that so."

And so, the boy once again turned silent. Though I didn't really want to kill a person, it was better to do so than being killed.

I killed a person. Because of the words of the boy, that thought finally weighed down on me.

Suddenly, my hands began to tremble. The knife that I couldn't let go of before easily slipped out of my hand. The shaking has spread towards my whole body resulting in my feet halting.

"Oy! What's the matter?"

I couldn't even make myself answer the boy's question anymore.

"Hey? Are you alright? We have to hurry and escape."

I knew that much. I killed that man, but he had comrades. If I didn't get out of the slum area, next time I would be the one to be killed.

However, no matter what, I could not move. It was not as if my body wasn't really capable of moving. It was because my consciousness began turning hazy, to the point I couldn't even hear the voice of the boy anymore.

“...! Hur...! Where...!?”

I could neither understand him anymore nor had the strength to think about it.

And so my consciousness was slowly swallowed by darkness.

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When I woke up, in front of me was a grainy, wooden ceiling. It seemed that for some reason, I was sleeping on a bed.

It was a dream — is what I thought but, I noticed that the ceiling in front of me was not something that was familiar.

I rose in panic and glanced around, the surroundings of the bed had a retro feeling to them, with refined furniture in place, a western-styled room.

Inclining my head towards my right, I noticed another person.

Upon noticing, I instantly began to feel awfully down.

That person approached the bed.

“It seems you have woken up. I will report it, so I will leave for a bit. Please wait for me right here.”

Brown hair and blue eyes. No matter how you looked at her, she was not Japanese. In addition, she was wearing a maid uniform and had a calming voice.

She left the room.

It seemed I was still in the dream. If I was already awake then that was—

Being able to calm myself, I decided to think about things.

What was that world?— I couldn’t come up with an answer to the question.

What was that country called? — The Gran Flamm Kingdom was the certain answer that floated in my mind.

Just who was I? Moriya Ryou was the name that floated in my mind. That was obvious.

However, inside me, there was another person. There could be no mistake about it.

What should I do from there on? Did that person within me know?

Where was I born? The answer was Tokyo.

It just wouldn't go well at all. As long as I was still "myself", was it not possible to ask for answers? The other me, before I lost consciousness, did the information floating in my head at that time come from him?

Thinking about it, what I was pondering then was useless speculation. For now, I had to attempt to do everything on my own.

Where was my house in the town- the answer, the address came to my mind. There was a decrepit shelter made of planks that seemed to serve as my bedroom. Various things were scattered around the floor.

My way of inquiring my other self was successful.

I tried asking about my parents, so to speak, in this world. As I thought, there were none. If you also questioned the other me, the answer would be the same. I had no parents.

Who was the man I killed? The name Dan surfaced in my mind. It was a man whom I knew by the name. Also, that Dan was someone whom I hated a lot. It was a man that I didn't know, but was hated by the other me.

Why was that? Having asked my head that, I immediately regretted that decision. A lot of memories began to flood in. Him throwing abusive language at me was the norm, receiving violence was also frequent. It was not just that. That man called Dan, has also sexually assaulted me before. The me, who was also a male.

That moment, as the feeling of humiliation surfaced on my mind, I began to nurture hate against him.

That was right. It was me, myself.

Around this time, I began to realize, that my body was also small. Though the long hair

that stretched down, was the same color I was used to, the skin of my body seemed paler.

It was likely, that rather than I having turned into a child, I had broken into the body of the other me. Was it possession or reincarnation, I did not know, but for the time being, that was just how it was.

I was in a different world than the one that I had been born into. As for me on that other world, he most likely had already died.

I tried pulling the memories from before when I had been riding the bus. What I could remember was only riding the bus from the station, entering the ring road and the inside of the bus turning strangely bright. It was not the light that you would experience upon reincarnating. I could clearly recognize, that the strange light, that brightened the inside of the bus, was coming from some other source.

When trying to remember what happened next, I couldn't recall anything.

Trying to make sense of it from there, maybe I instantly died from a collision accident. I shouldn't have sat on that seat. Because I had been young, I should've had continued standing and maybe by having done that, I wouldn't have had died.

Thinking about such things, for now, would be moot.

For now, I would think about things that I had to focus my thoughts on.

The other me was suggesting, that I should leave the capital immediately. It was due to fear of revenge from that Dan's comrades.

With that, I was in full agreement. Even I didn't want to die at all.

However the problem was, the current me was an orphan and had no one to rely on. I only managed to keep on living by eating the food scraps of the slums. In order to escape, I needed money and skills among other things.

That was not it, there's something I had to figure out before that.

Where was this place?

Had I escaped?

Was it possible, that I had been caught already by someone who should never have caught me?

I immediately got out of my bed and glanced towards the window. I could see blue sky spreading outside the window. Below me was a beautiful garden and I was on the third floor. It would be impossible to escape through the window.

Moving towards the door, a sound coming from other side entered my ears. As if in the right timing, I suddenly heard a woman's voice.

"Lady Ariel! You must not go! You must not approach that room!"

I didn't have to listen carefully because it clearly entered my ears. Knowing the meaning behind those words, I immediately returned to bed.

Just as I did so, the door opened roughly. Slowly turning my head towards the door, what I saw there, was the same blonde and green eyes of the boy from the slum area, except this time it was a girl.

The girl was not chubby at all, she also had very striking, almond shaped eyes. Overall, she had a lovely face.

That girl who approached me with a cheeky glare began to gaze in my direction.

The words, that came from the girl as she opened her mouth were.

"Fuun~ I see, so you are the pet that my esteemed brother brought with him."

It was the most impolite word.

I took back all my previous remarks. She was not cute at all, she was just an impudent young girl. That was, what I thought, but my curiosity was piqued by a word that the girl said.

"Esteemed brother has brought?"

"That's right. The filthy boy, that **that** older brother of mine has brought with him."

Though filthy was a bit excessive, I wasn't in the position to voice complaints.

“By brought you meant?”

“You, who fell unconscious in that slum, was brought up by **that** older brother of mine on his back, and was saved by him.”

“He... on his back.”

Though I was concerned, as to why would she press the word “that” every time, the fact that the boy carried me here was certain.

“That’s right.”

“Which means, this house is?”

“Oh my, haven’t you heard me? This place is the mansion of Marquess Windhill.”

For some reason, while puffing her chest, the girl declared such. Thinking that it was strangely cute, I couldn’t help but smile.

Being brought to that boy’s house, perhaps I could rest with ease now.

“What are you smiling at?”

The girl asked me, who had smile floating in his face.

“I’m thinking that I’m saved.”

“.....”

The girl whom I answered, began to look at me in displeasure.

“Is there something wrong?”

“You way of speaking. How impertinent for something like a pet.”

“Saying pet...”

“I am a person of nobility you know? Your way of speaking does not fit your company!”

“That... I apologize for my presumptuousness milady.”

This was my carelessness. This girl was a noble and I was a commoner. It was likely, that I belonged to the lowest class as a person who lived in the slums.

For this world, to have a different class system to my former world, it had to be a rough world.

“Oh my, it seems you can properly speak.”

“Merely a bit, Miss.”

“Well, as long as you are properly disciplined around those parts, then it’s good.”

Discipline.

For this girls, it seemed, I was just a pet to the very end.

“But before that, your attire. Your hair is unkempt, in addition somehow... you smell.”

“Do I smell bad, Miss?”

“You do. It’s a very unpleasant smell.”

“My apologies.”

To be blunt, those words hurts my feelings, but as for the girl, it seemed she didn’t really care about that in the slightest.

“Lisa”

“Yes!”

As the girl called, the appearance of the attendant behind her was that of a woman. It’s probably her handmaiden.

“Make this thing clean. Brush his body, tidy up his hair, give him a suitable appearance becoming of a pet of the heir of the house Windhill.”

“Yes. Certainly.”

Was the pet treatment already decided?

“Well then, when you’ve become tidy, I’ll meet you again.”

“...”

“I will meet you again.”

“...I will await that anxiously milady.”

“Yes. Well then, excuse me.”

It seems that was the right answer. The girl with the aloofly composed expression left the room.

What remained was me and the handmaiden.

“This way.”

She had a dismissive look and, as it subsided, I was told to follow her.

It seemed I was not very welcome. I didn’t really mind that. It wasn’t as if I would be there for long.

Only to let the pressing danger pass. The next hurdle would be to obtain a reward and gain a fund big enough to leave the capital.

I wondered what I should do to achieve the goal. There was too much to think of and it felt like my head would explode.

But even so, I had to properly think about it. Me now wasn’t capable of anything but thinking after all.

Chapter 2

In The End, Just Who The Heck Am I?

I followed the handmaiden down the corridors.

As we walked around, I became all the more surprised having come to understand the vastness of this building. A hallway that continued to expand as if endless, and in the walls doors that lined up to the point of being countless.

Being in one of those large hotels probably gave the same feeling, but because I had never visited one of those, it was just a wild guess.

Through that corridor, numerous people were walking.

There were females wearing the same maid clothing as the one that was worn by the woman called Lisa. The males, on the other hand, were wearing suits, or rather maybe it was closer to a tuxedo. I had also noticed the people in helmets that rarely passed by, I wondered if they were something like escorts or knights

It was very similar to the medieval Europe that one saw in the movies.

Though I was glancing at those who we passed by through the opening in my bangs quickly enough to make them not realize that I was looking, those others were looking at me without any restraint.

What was a dirty child doing there? Even though I couldn't hear it, I understood what was going on in their heads.

Just how long did we have to walk? Descending one more level and then exiting the building, what we arrived into was a courtyard with a fountain located ahead.

“Wash your body here.”

“Yes?”

“I will leave the towel here. You can call me when you are done until then I will wait.”

“...Okay.”

My questions would be ignored.

As if she already said what she had to, the handmaiden left.

Was taking a bath for an orphan of the slums such a waste or something? Or was it that taking a bath was a luxury for the other people?

Upon asking inside my head to the other me, the only thing I understood was, that I had never taken a bath myself.

There was a spherical pipe that projected out of the fountain and from there, water was continuously flowing. There were countless water buckets around the place where water poured. At the very least, it functioned not only as a fountain but also a bathing place.

Holding that bucket in my hands, I let the flowing water fill it.

Thank goodness, the current season wasn't winter. In the first place, I didn't even know if this world had seasons — no, it seems it did.

Would I be able to manage with this weather difference?

I began to take off the robe-like clothes I wore. There was nothing underneath them, I was stark naked. Though it was embarrassing, right then I was just a kid and by convincing myself with that, I managed to bear with the embarrassment.

I poured the water starting from my head. Looking at it as it flowed over my skin down to my toes, my mood began to worsen. Just from being poured on, the water became muddy. Just how much dirt was there on my body?

Scooping water again, this time, I poured water on myself while scratching my head. I ignored the fact that the water got even dirtier and began to feel good.

While scratching my head, I poured water over myself again and again.

Being able to use such clean water in this way, it seems it was the first time for the other me. I started to feel happiness filling my heart.

When the amount of dirt flowing in the water has decreased, I started to pour it while scratching my scalp. But having to do it manually seemed like it would be a pain, so I knelt below the pipe that stretched from the fountain and holding my head underneath I began to wash.

Because my body was just that of a small child, it was easy to do so.

Though originally I didn't particularly love bathing, bathing like this would never have been a bother at all, rather I could have gotten addicted to this wonderful feeling.

With this situation, though wishing for shampoo would have been useless, I began to want for soap. Was there soap? Though they probably had one, I guessed that it came with a high price.

Someone like me, used to living in a world of abundant resources in the past, would have to deal with a lot of hardships by living in this world. When that thought entered me, I immediately dismissed it from my mind.

Thinking about it, only negative thoughts had been surfacing in my head.

Right then, I just wanted to continue enjoying this bath.

Because I was already done with my hair, I switched to my body. Just washing with water and scrubbing, caused crumbling bits of dirt to come off. Suddenly realizing something, I began to search for an item that separated from me in the fountain.

My objective was unexpectedly found immediately.

It was a stone with a rough surface. I picked it up and started using it to scrub my body making the dirt come off with a bit of pain.

Because I could not reach my back, I lied down and scratched the grime off using fountain surface.

The truth was, I wanted to wash my body immediately after entering the fountain. but thinking that I would probably be scolded, I stopped myself.

Not minding the fact my body was feeling cold, I intently continued bathing.

After a considerable time, the handmaiden appeared in my view, but I was still stark

naked.

Though my appearance was that of a child, the person inside was a fine young man. Being seen nude would be really embarrassing, so I quickly wiped my body with a towel and immediately put on some clothes.

My hair was still soaking wet. Covering it with a towel, I immediately wiped it dry. Because it was as long as a girl's hair, it was irritating.

"Are you done?"

"Yes. I'll just dry my hair."

"If you're going to wipe it, do it with this."

Saying that, she handed me a new towel. Receiving it, I wiped my hair. Though it was obviously easier to wipe it with a dry towel, it would've been better if she handed both of them over from the start. Though those thoughts entered my mind, I didn't voice them.

With the moisture being removed to some extent, I gathered my irritating hair together and tied it with the towel.

My body was refreshed. My line of sight was also good. Anyhow, it felt good.

"Thank you for waiting."

"..."

Though I called out to the handmaiden, there was no answer. Thinking about what was wrong, I turned my gaze towards her, she was standing there stiff with her eyes wide open.

"Erm..."

"...Oh, you are done... Let's return to your room."

Though the handmaiden had quite a complex facial expression, she said nothing more and headed towards the building.

The confused me could only follow after her.

During the time returning to the room, the surrounding gazes were turned towards me without restraint. If I was to speak, I would say I felt like they just got worse.

There were people taken aback, there were also ones frankly frowning, or showing unpleasant feelings. I knew it, it got worse.

Thinking that something turned weird after washing my body, I began to check myself and rub my face to examine it, but even having done that, I understood nothing. Since it couldn't be helped, I began walking with my face straight ahead, as if not minding the stares from around me,

Climbing to the third floor, I had passed through countless doors on my way. Upon returning to my former room, the handmaiden halted.

"We have prepared a meal in the room."

"T-Thank you very much."

"...Please stay inside and behave well."

"Okay..."

As always, her gaze remained cold.

The social status discrimination in this world might be worse than I thought.

If that was the case, being allowed inside the house and having food and room prepared beforehand must have been a considerable show of hospitality already.

No matter how I thought of it, I would never understand.

When I entered the room, as the handmaiden said, there was food on the table.

It was a piece of round bread, salad, scrambled egg and orange juice.

Upon looking at those, an intense feeling of hunger began to assault me. Thinking about it, ever since I've regained consciousness in this world, I had not eaten once. As for the other me, it was even worse than that, it seems he usually had an empty

stomach for the whole day. Though he had gotten used to it.

I sat on the chair and began by trying the orange juice.

“...Tasty.”

The strong flavor was delicious, to the point that made one doubt what the orange juice of the former world really was.

With my expectations raised, I began to put the bread in my mouth. It was tough and seemed dried out, the former world’s one was better.

Afterward came the scrambled egg. It was really great and also had a strong flavor.

The salad was the same. Every vegetable’s taste was very strong, even without a dressing it was surprisingly delicious.

The other me was also delighted. It seems I had never tasted such fresh food in my whole life... Fresh?

Information suddenly flooded my mind but was immediately flushed away. It’s probably because I had been reminded of things better not remembered during meal time.

The food in front of me disappeared in just a blink of an eye. Although I was far from having my stomach full, I did feel sated. It seemed that the other me was a very light eater.

My body felt relief, even my stomach was very satisfied. Due to that, I decided to thoroughly think through my current situation.

No matter how you looked at it this place was definitely different to my former world.

Though it could possibly be just a dream, trying to cling to that possibility would be pointless.

From then on, I had to figure out how should I live in this world.

Though it had an atmosphere similar to medieval Europe, or rather because it was like the medieval Europe, I had no idea about how did the society work.

Though I could somewhat rely on my other self, I couldn't really expect much. Not only was he just a child, the only thing he knew about was the special environment of the slums, with little idea of anything else.

And as I already knew from the memories coming to my mind, he suffered quite a lot of hardships.

It seemed the time for one to be able to understand his/her surroundings was when reaching adulthood.

I had memories of living under one roof with adults. Because it had been in the slums the weren't exactly engaged in honest work, but there were no reasons to be troubled about food. Even if it was relative to the standards of my other self.

When those adults had disappeared, the situation had turned worse.

There was a limit to how one could get food as a very young child, he had no choice but to scavenge at the dump site. Looking for edible scraps in the piles of garbage was not easy either, after all, he was not the only one searching.

There was mad scramble towards the garbage of good quality, and he, not having the strength to win, had to turn towards the refuse others ignored. Digestive problems to the point it felt like agony had happened countless of times.

The hardships were not limited to only that.

Though he himself didn't know why it seemed he was hated by his surroundings.

Those who wouldn't permit him to get close weren't just a few, in addition, no matter what he did, he would not be forgiven.

That was the atmosphere around him.

He was not strong, nor did he have a person to rely on, yet he managed to live in the lawless zone that was the slums. It sure was good that he didn't die.

I also realized the reason why I had been lying bruised in that place before.

The other me had tried to kill that man called "Dan" and his comrades at the time. He had been gathering weapons and been waiting for the right chance for a while, and

when the right opportunity arrived, he failed, having the tables splendidly turned on him. He was beaten up to near death and was left battered at the location.

It looked like he was a very proud child.

Even faced with such a disastrous start to life, he did not yield and had a strong enough heart to take action and try to change his situation.

He was greatly different to all the other orphans, having realized that all the things he could never have or reach, gave up on silly dreams and focused on simple bloody-minded survival.

Would I do the same in his place? Could I abandon my hopes so ruthlessly if the situation required? A tide of doubts and questions swelled in my mind.

This body belonged to the other me and he gave up on his future to keep on living. Didn't I just close the doors on that awaiting life?

That would not do. I would not allow such a thing.

I had to recover the will of this body, I should be able to do so. The being that killed the person before was, in fact, not myself. The actions at that time were not mine, but my other self's.

I would hand it over, this body.

Originally, this body belonged to him, to begin with anyway.

I willed him to rise, to wake up. The life from that day onward belonged to him, from then on, I would have him live that life according to his will.

Even just a little, that help... He would...



A strange feeling. This was the second time. I had the sensation of waking up, but I could recall nothing else.

In front of me there was an empty bowl.

It was my first time having that kind of food. Not even mentioning the taste, but just how many years had it been since I had eaten food that smelled good? At the very least, not since that guy had died.

I... There was another self that was living inside of me.

No, that was wrong. Not myself. There was a guy inside my head who knew various things I had no idea about. Just who was he?

I had lots of memories that I didn't understand at all.

A great many towers, tall enough to make you crane your neck up, were standing in a line.

What was that?

I knew, that it was called a "skyscraper", however, this was my first time hearing that word and still, for some reason, I understood what it meant.

There was a box that was moving as if being pulled by a horse.

What was it?

A car, an automobile.

Though I did not know about it all, for some reason I knew that it was called such.

Even though the night sky was spread overhead, the surroundings were bright. Various colors were sparkling all around. Was this a well-known magic? It was not, answered someone within me.

Though I was curious about those things, I put them aside.

What was all that?

A different world. That other person inside me seemed to be born in a different world.

Though I struggled to believe it, I knew that there could be no doubt.

I didn't know what was what anymore.

In the first place, I thought I should've died.

Dan had tormented me terribly. Slums were not a naive place where one would let a would-be assassin live, but I was alive and I killed that bastard.

It was frightening.

After killing the guy whom I hated so much, rather than feeling happy I was overwhelmed with fear. Unable to stop shivering and unable to move, I had lost consciousness.

This place was where that noble brat was living.

The treatment I received until now was not bad. However, the other party was nobility. They wouldn't feel gratitude towards someone like me, that was apparent from the gaze of that handmaiden.

That stare was similar to those of the bastards at the slums, disgust, mixed with something else, a gaze where one can only feel displeasure. Though the guy inside me had no idea, I had experienced it many times.

As I thought, it would be better to abandon my greed after all.

After getting out of this mansion, how should I live afterward?

The other guy knew various things that I had no idea about.

That should prove to be helpful.

Suddenly, I heard a voice in the hallway again.

It seemed that the cheeky noble brat would make another appearance.

When the door opened, that little girl entered as I expected. Though she was puffing her chest conceitedly, because she had such little body I just found it ridiculous.

“It seems you have become clea—”

After approaching me, she stiffened as if taken aback.

It was a bit different to those guys in the hallway.

“...Pretty.”

“Huh?”

The unexpected words the little brat muttered made me surprised.

“Hey, those eyes. Why are the colors different?”

“...Colors?”

I had no idea what was this girl talking about. Saying that the colors of my eyes were different, wasn't it normal for others to have different eye colors?

“Have you ever tried looking in the mirror?”

“...No.”

There was no way that the folks in the slum area would have something that expensive. The daughter of aristocrats didn't even know that much?

“Well then, have a look.”

The girl took a small mirror from her pocket and presented it to my face.

Taking it would be unnecessary. My face was already reflected on the surface, but because it was too small and didn't show the whole thing, I had to move my face from side to side

The color of my eyes, it was different indeed.

It's not that the color of the girl's eyes was different from mine, but my eyes differed in color from each other. Blue right eye, red left eye, I had never met such kind of a human.

I finally realized what differentiated me from the other people.

“See, doesn't it differ?”

The little girl said delightedly to the bewildered me.

I had no idea what was so fun about it.

“Yeah...”

I decided to return a vague reply.

“ Though your eyes indeed are pretty red and blue, you also have a lovely face. Even your hair is long, just like a girl somehow.”

The girl said that while bringing her face close and staring at my eyes. Was I being praised or being spoken ill of? I didn't know. I thought that, at any rate, I should at least cut the hair.

“Ariel-sama! Please distance yourself!”

The handmaiden raised her voice probably thinking we were too close for opposite genders, even if we were still just kids.

“Oh please be quiet, I wanted to look at this child's face carefully.”

A voice louder than handmaiden's was raised. It looked like the selfish noble girl would not do as she was asked. But even so, the servant didn't withdraw obediently.

“That's no good! Being too close to those with heterochromia will bring misfortune.*”

“Heterochromia?”

It seemed it was her first time hearing it. I, on the other hand, had heard it countless times, albeit I did not know the meaning. However, with that, I learned the reason why I was hated.

Apparently, humans with the same condition as me were a sinister existence.

“What is heterochromia?”

“Just like in this boy, the color of the eyes is different.”

“Why would it bring misfortune?”

“That is...”

“If there is no reason, then there is no need to mind it. I do not believe in things like “misfortunes”. After all, its face is this pretty.”

“However...”

“Be silent. If you speak another word, I will have you vanish from this house.”

“...Yes, milady.”

With a mind that would only follow her own will, this noble girl was outrageously overbearing.

Though the maid didn’t say anything else, as told, her face was clearly tinged with displeasure.

It looked like the little lady was not loved much, but then having others deal with such personality frequently, that much was obvious.

Not even giving the maid a shred of concern, the girl looked at my eyes with great interest.

“Hey, do you know how to use magic?”

“Haa?”

“It’s magic you know? Magic.”

“There’s no way I could.”

“Is that so? Even though you have such a beautiful face.”

I couldn’t understand that talk at all. There was no way a commoner like me could use magic. It could only be used by the descendants of high-class nobles.

“...But if someone teaches you, maybe you’ll be able to?”

Like I told her, there was no way I would.

“Well, let’s leave it for now. You will be residing here from now on after all, I shall find out little by little.”

“Huh?!”

“What are you surprised about?”

“Live here...?”

“Is that not natural? You are onii-sama’s pet, you know? Therefore, you are also my pet.”

“...Pet.”

“You, what is your name?”

While I was bewildered due to being called a pet, my name was asked. It seems she didn’t concern herself with people’s reactions.

Name... I couldn’t remember my name. The thing that came to my mind was not a name that belonged to me.

Just who was I?

“So you don’t even have a name? Then I shall bestow you one.”

“Ah, no.”

I absolutely didn’t want that. That’s what I thought right away.

“Then if you have one, tell me.”

“...Ryou. Ryou Moriya.”

Since I had no other choice, I told her that guy’s name. I instantly regretted it a bit.

Somehow, it was a weird name.

“...Riyo, Rio.”

It seems the little girl thought the same. It's hard to pronounce.

"...Rion. Oh well, your name is going to be Rion, okay?"

"No, that's n..."

"It's Rion. I have decided. Do you have any complaints?"

"...none."

Yielding to the little girl's coercion, I accepted. I could also feel the other guy voicing out his complaints.

I told him to endure it. I was trying to do the same.

If I refused her then, this girl would, without a doubt, think of an even weirder name.

Knowing that Rion was not the worst name out there, it seems he was convinced.

"Then, Rion. After tidying up your hair, let's dress you up afterward?"

"Hair? Tidy up?"

"You have to be beautiful to be a worthy pet."

"..."

At last, I finally realized the meaning of the word "Pet". Pet, animal, a being that was to be brought up by a human to love. In that case, it fit, because humans also belonged to the animal category.

Even knowing she wouldn't say anything, I reflexively glanced towards the handmaiden looking for salvation. She said nothing while shaking her head slightly. It looked like she also had kindness in her, but since she couldn't veto anything, her thoughts didn't matter.

In the end, while being turned this way and that all day long, I was being toyed with by the little girl.

By tidying my hair she only meant gathering the ends together, so the length didn't

really change.

Having my hair smeared with oil brought enough difficult feelings already, but something was also spread on my face.

The clothes prepared for changing were the little girl's hand-me-downs.

Even though I was a guy.

Another memory was added to the list of things I didn't want to ever remember.

Transgender, someone who transcends the gender fence, homosexual, bisexual... While I was indeed violated by a guy before, I was not something like that at all!

Chapter 3

For The Time Being, My Job Is Decided!

When I opened my eyes, I saw I was in a different room than yesterday.

One to which I was guided to last night and told that it belonged to me.

There was a bed, a small desk and a wardrobe placed inside. Even with just that, there was hardly any space left in the narrow room.

Because it was similar to my former world's room, I didn't really mind. Its size had been 4.5 tatami mats with comfort room included, but no bathtub. It had been located about 10 minutes away by bus from the station and its only redeeming feature had been the price.

Those were my memories.

Even though I had already given up on my consciousness, why did I return? I tried both asking him and surrendering my control again, but there was no response.

It was possible that he was just sleeping.

Yesterday was quite tiring after all, particularly on the mind.

That aside, that ojou-sama was really a typical selfish little princess, huh? Even after doing however she pleased to her surroundings, there was no one to protest.

With that, I started to worry what kind of woman would she grow up into.

Even though she looked pretty cute.

On that note, my appearance was quite lovely too, huh? Was it because of my former face? When she put the makeup on me and dressed me in female clothes, my reflection in the mirror charmed me completely.

Even though my body was just that of a child, it already offered such glamour- What

was I doing getting enticed by myself.

I was not supposed to be a lolicon.

The other me really felt down, huh?

Well, I guessed that was the proper reaction.

You had endured well.

I needed to somehow stop myself from heading down the wrong path.

Suddenly, while thinking about those silly things and wasting my time, I heard a knock on the door.

They were opened without even waiting for a reply.

I thought it would be the ojou-sama again, but it seems it was only the female attendant.

“Have you woken up?”

“Yes. Is there something I should do?”

“You don’t have to do anything. Just behave and remain in this room.”

“What do you...”

I started to ask because I got curious about her mode of speech, but her cold gaze stopped me.

“It is yet to be decided how you should be dealt with And no matter what Vincent-sama and Ariel-sama says, the one to do that is going to be the master of the house.”

“I’ll stay here and be a pet?”

The other me aside, this turn of events was favorable for me.

“Someone like you should never be in this house, I’m afraid that’s what’s going to happen.”

So not because of the owed favors, but due to disgust the source of which was...

“Is it because of... the heterochromia?”

“Yes.”

“Is it that detestable?”

“It is, particularly to the aristocrats.”

“...Why?”

“I have come here to explain the reason to Ariel-sama, but you should be told as well.”

“Please.”

“Do you know that the person’s eye color represents his attribute?”

“...No.”

Even If I managed to wake up and try asking the one inside my mind, I doubt he would know a thing about nobility.

“...Let’s start from that then. There is noble blood flowing in the aristocrat’s veins and it contains mana.”

So this is the reason why the other me thought that no one but nobility could use magic. The quality of a person’s blood was different. It was a concept hard to understand for a modern man like me, blood was blood, it should be possible to transfer it with a transfusion, why not do just that?

“A great example of that is the royal family and three great Houses. As the name indicates, the attribute of the Gran Flamm royals is fire. That’s why their direct descendants have red colored eyes. The eyes of the king are naturally the most beautiful scarlet.”

It was fire, so the color was red. Truly easy to comprehend. Though the other colors have yet to be explained, there was already a part that I didn’t understand.

“As the name indicates?”

“You... don’t even know that?”

“It’s because I come from the slums.”

Well, the other me did.

The woman was very surprised, but after giving it a little thought she dismissed the distraction.

“That’s right, isn’t it. You have probably never studied either. In ancient language, Gran Flamm means 【Great Flame】 fitting the fire attribute.”

Hadn’t it been that the royal family had picked the name because the fire had been their attribute? I didn’t voice the thought to not draw her displeasure and keep the explanation going.

“Aqusmea means 【Sacred Water】 ,Fatillas means 【Fertile Soil】 and this family’s name means 【Healing Wind】 . The royal family and the three great Houses complete the four elements. That’s how special they are.”

The attributes of magic were fire, water, wind and earth. Did they not have light or darkness, or were they just unaware of them? I guessed that even if I asked the female attendant, she probably wouldn’t know about it.

“In accordance with those attributes, they all carry specific eye colors, right?”

“That’s right. Now then, since you understand the background, let’s return to the heterochromia. And why people think it brings misfortune.”

“If the eye color indicates the attribute, then one person having two different eye colors... Can have neither.”

“Correct. The two elements would contradict each other. Being eligible for two elements will result in not being loved by either.”

Again, an odd concept.

What did they mean by “not being loved”? even though the female attendant had a look full of disdain I decided to ask her about it.

“By not being loved you mean?”

“You don’t even know this... The effectiveness of magic depends on the intervention of the world, the four elements. Being loved by them will make one’s magic stronger, lesser affection means weaker effect and if there are no feelings then there will be no results.”

“...So, does it mean that the four elements have a will of their own?”

“The world itself has a will. And since it’s composed of the four elements, it is obvious those also have a will of their own.”

Perhaps the four elements were spirits. However, it seemed that the female attendant was not aware of their existence. Or if she knew, then maybe she was hiding that from me. That was probably due to the rules of the house.

“Does it mean that because you have blue eyes, you can use water magic?”

“Ah?”

It was a total mistake.

Judging from her reaction, that person couldn’t use magic at all.

“I’m sorry. It seems I’ve misunderstood. You are not an aristocrat, right?”

“I am an aristocrat!”

Another blunder.

It looked like this time I’ve made her very angry.

I relaxed my mind a little.

Inwardly I apologized for thinking that I could just ask any question.

“...Ignorance begets impoliteness. Even though it doesn’t concern you as you will soon leave this place anyway, I’ll tell you just in case. I come from the family of a baron.”

Maybe because she saw me feeling down or maybe due to some other reason, the

explanations continued.

I felt relieved.

"There's a hierarchy among aristocrats and the barons are on the lowest rung of the ladder. Well, technically there is also a peerage rank called a baronet..."

It seemed that her explanation of this country's aristocratic system went on forever from there.

The most important title, aside from Duke that required a direct connection to the royal family, was Marquess. The parts about Dukes, I couldn't really understand. All I got was that they were king's retainers, highest in rank considering the status and somehow outside the normal hierarchy.

Normal titles, from the highest, would be Marquess followed by Earl, Viscount, and Baron. There were three Marquesses and each one of them had their own respective domain the northern, the western and the eastern territory. Those were vital points in the country's defense.

Earls had their own respective territories under the great three located closer to the center of the country

There seemed to be an enormous difference in size of Marquess and Earl holdings.

The three great Houses were special in so many aspects.

Viscounts were used by superior aristocrats as administrators and often entrusted with their own territory and/or a castle.

In Japanese terms a Marquess would be a regional governor, an Earl would be a prefectural governor and a Viscount would be a town mayor.

It felt a bit different, but strictly speaking, I probably didn't need that knowledge anyway.

Female attendant's family was not regarded as a nobility in the truest sense because Baron is an honorary title granted due to achievements and owned no town or territory. Also, it could only be inherited once and second generation heir would become a Baronet.

Returning to the topic of magic, commoners doesn't have the ability to use it. Baron rank families, due to how the peculiarities of the title, in order to have the ability to use magic had to frequently marry with a family of Viscounts. Their ability to cast spells was not guaranteed.

Unfortunately, she missed that opportunity.

Explaining this much, despite being displeased, was probably because she was a gentle person.

In conclusion, the thicker the bloodline the better the effectiveness of magic.

Which meant for me, who was a commoner with heterochromia symbolizing fire and water that was a horrible combination, magic would definitely be impossible.

My short-lived dream of casting spells vanished.

Feeling depressed again, I heard things that were similar to what was said the day before.

Since the person shouting yesterday was right in front of me and holding her head down, it was definitely someone else.

The selfish ojou-sama arrived.

“Rion! Come with me immediately!”

“Yes milady?”

“Quit being absentminded! This is urgent, you know!?”

The ojou-sama seemed to be in a hurry.

“Ariel-sama, just what is happening?”

“It’s about father and the others, they are discussing Rion!”

“Ah... So that’s what it is.”

For me this was not really urgent at all, I had already heard about being driven out

from the handmaiden.

"They said the way to deal with such sinister existences should be to dispose of them!
I won't permit such a thing!"

"...Eh?"

"If they see how Rion looks, they will surely reconsider! Rion is such a beautiful pet
after all!"

"..."

"Come with me immediately!"

"Yes, milady."

With the complex feelings coming to my mind, I followed the ojou-sama.

I disliked being a pet, but I hated the prospect of getting killed more!

Because the destination was quite far, walking towards it took forever.

The room I resided in was probably one of the servant quarters and the rooms of the family should be considerably distant.

With that in my mind, we kept on running down the hallway.

The ojou-sama in front of me seemed to be having a hard time, I wonder why was she this desperate? Running to the point of nearly getting winded.

Even though she was an aristocrat...

The last thought was not mine.

It seems the other had woken up. I didn't really have any particular memories about aristocrats, but it seems I had come to hate them anyway.

I understood those feelings well.

People who had nothing envied those who had everything, even I felt this before.

It's about coming to resent the unfairness of the world.

"W-We should be near"

That voice instantly extinguished my gloomy mood. The ojou-sama never stopped running even though her face was marked by pain.

Was I that important for a pet? Thinking about it, I couldn't help but smile bitterly at the irony.

"We've arrived... Haa, haa, haa."

She adjusted her breathing as she held the door. I didn't know why wouldn't she enter immediately.

"Wait a bit. Is my hair disheveled?"

"A little, milady."

"Fix it."

"Uhh, okay..."

Looked like she was concerned about her appearance. Was it something that all aristocratic women would fuss about?

Even though she was still out of breath, the ojou-sama was trying to straighten her attire perfectly. This was probably what people called "to correct one's self".

Hesitating a bit I put her disheveled hair in order. Noticing sweat that was starting to show on her forehead I let go of the hair that was tucked together, took the hem of my clothes, and wiped it off.

It seems this kind of thing was not good because her gaze became even more intense.

"H-have you not brought a handkerchief with you?"

"Eh... No, I haven't."

"Well then, use this."

She presented a handkerchief that she took out from her purse. I took it and wiped the sweat from her face.

The ojou-sama was quietly keeping her eyes closed. The way she did that made her childlessness increase.

“How is it going?”

“Ah... Yes. You look adorable.”

“I-Is that so?”

“Yes.”

“...Well then, fine. Let's proceed.”

With one final deep breath, the ojou-sama went towards the door moving her hands as if she was about to knock.

“Stop fooling around! I have picked that up and it belongs to me!”

We heard a voice inside the room.

It was familiar and belonged to the boy from the day before.

However, saying that a person belonged to him, why were those two siblings capable of such thoughts.

“Vincent-sama. This is not the time to be selfish.”

“Which part of this is being selfish!? You are tossing out my property on your own accord! This is something to be angry about!”

“However, there is a problem about the thing you've picked up.”

“I see no problems!”

“It is an orphan from the slums. Why are you feeling obliged to such a thing? You should consider that you are being taken advantage of.”

So that was why they would have me dead? Wasn't that too extreme? My outward appearance was that of a child and even the one inside was just 18. I didn't understand why they were so wary about a kid like me.

"I don't feel any obligation at all!"

"But, weren't you saved by him?"

"I have never said something like that! I have not been saved! In fact, I have been the one who saved him!"

"...That..."

"That's why I don't feel obliged in the slightest. The one who should feel in debt is him."

Though the reasoning was absurd, perhaps this was the boy's way of protecting me. Though the other me disagreed with that idea.

"He also has heterochromia."

"It's not like it's contagious!"

"It's not about that!"

"Well then, what is this about?"

"It's not safe to carelessly get close to someone of unknown identity and origin!"

"He is Rion of the slums."

"That's not what I mean..."

Right after that quiet utterance, without even waiting for him to complete his reply, the ojou-sama proceeded to knock on the door and enter.

I wondered if that was good manners.

"Ariel-sama..."

The man previously talking to the boy spoke with a troubled voice. Was it because he

was about to face a formidable opponent? I didn't know.

"This is Rion. You already understand who he is and where he came from, right?"

The declaration beat down the argument about unknown origins.

"Ariel-sama, pardon me, but that is not what I meant."

"It is wrong to judge a person without even looking at him yourself."

"Well that is correct indeed, however..."

His line of sight went towards me. Actually not just his, the eyes of everyone in this room turned towards me.

Was the man comfortably sitting on the sofa the Marquess?

Was the beautiful person next to him his wife?

Because the two resembled the ojou-sama, there could be no mistake.

Vincent was sitting in front of the two and the others were standing at the back of the Marquess.

"You, what are you called?"

"They call me Rion, sir."

"What I want is your real name."

"It's Ryou."

"W-what?"

"Ryou, sir."

"..."

"Please, call me Rion."

“...I understand.”

I wondered why Ryou was so hard to comprehend. Maybe when I speak in Nihongo, the words coming out are different?

“Where are your parents?”

“I don’t have any. They have died when I was still small.”

“...How did you live after that?”

“Scavenging, sir. I was too young to work after all.”

“So you have never worked?”

“I have done chores, but that’s not a profession.”

“Well then, where did you learn to speak in this way?”

The man threw that question as if he had triumphed. It seemed he thought that he had obtained some sort of evidence. Using Keigo with expectations of a better result might have been a mistake on my part.

“From my dead parents, sir.”

I decided to lie with an innocent face for the time being.

“What have your parents done for a living?”

“I do not know. My parents have never spoken about their jobs.”

That was the truth and also more of a general rule. The jobs of slum dwellers were mostly shady, so not telling details to their children was the norm.

“When did you lose your parents?”

“I was around two years old, I don’t really remember the exact date.”

“Are you telling me you do not remember the day your parents died?”

“Sir, I do not even know what day is it now.”

Coming from the slums made fabricating my identity really easy.

“What was the cause of death?”

“I don’t know, when I woke up they were already dead. It’s not something unusual in the slums.”

“What do you plan to do after this?”

Since I didn’t seem to be shaken even a bit by the interrogation-like exchange, his wariness increased. It seemed we had arrived at a stalemate. Somehow I knew what kind of answer he wanted there.

“I have never given it a thought sir. There was no time yesterday.”

“...Then how about thinking about it now?”

“Right here? Is it really required?”

“What!?”

“What I want to do is my own problem. Though this may seem a bit rude, it is of no concern to the people present here.”

“...Do you mean, you don’t want to be meddled with by this family?”

“Sir, I do not understand the question. What kind of answer do you expect? If it’s about not wanting to be involved, then it would be better for the answer to come from your side.”

“That is...”

This man probably had no authority to make that decision. That’s why by finding faults in my responses, he would let the surroundings have information to make the judgment.

Although the worst outcome might have gotten me killed, I really couldn’t stand that man.

And anyway, I didn't want things to go his way.

"It seems my son has been in your care."

Suddenly, the man sitting on the sofa spoke. Because he said "his son", it confirmed that it was the Marquess.

"It would be rude not to say that it went both ways your excellency."

"Both ways?"

"I have saved your son from being taken hostage and as I fell unconscious when we were about to escape, he saved me in turn."

"I see. So it was "give and take"."

"Yes your excellency."

"Then I offer you the freedom to do what you want next. I can even send you home."

"“Father!”“

When I thought the matter settled, the siblings shouted simultaneously. I forgot that the two had opposed it. Despite thinking myself calm, I might still have been agitated after all.

"This thing belongs to me!"

"That is correct father, this is our pet."

As my life was spared already, I wanted them to stop that talk already.

"Is it not too big to be your pet, however?"

Excellency, even you!?

"It's fine. Since it always does as I say and most importantly, it's beautiful."

"...Well, that is indeed correct. However, it's too early for you Vincent. You must grow a little bit more."

“Why?”

“That’s... That’s just the way it is.”

I wondered what was the Marquess talking about? I felt like he was misunderstanding something.

“That’s right. Besides, the partner must not be a child or mother cannot approve of such a thing. Well, if it had reached the marriageable age I could probably agree.”

The words of both parents were complimenting each other. However, as I thought something was strange.

“Indeed. However, even if the other party is that beautiful, for her to become Vincent’s concubine, she has to have a certain pedigree.”

“Well, it would be just a mistress then there would be no problems.”

“I see. Mistress, huh? In that case...”

Were they convinced now? Or rather, what was the difference between concubine and mistress? It was not the time to think about that! There was an even bigger problem.

“Umm...”

“What is it?”

“I am a boy, though.”

“...Whaat!?”

I didn’t make my gender clear before, but even though your daughter was making a fuss, was it actually that important?

Or did the gender of the orphan you picked up not really matter?

“Well then, what are you going to use him for Vincent?”

“What for? A lot of things.”

“...As a valet?”

“Something like that.”

“I see. However, we already have a valet.”

“Ah, if that’s Vincent-sama desire, I will resign.”

Said the guy who was interrogating me before.

So this guy was a valet.

Considering that, he was quite ahead of himself. Besides, what made him so happy?

“Well then, what are you going to do from now on?”

“Because I would be troubled by losing a job, if possible I’d like to attend to Erwin-sama instead.”

“Erwin? A full-time valet of Erwin...”

I heard an unfamiliar name from the mouth of the Marquess. Because this was a discussion about valets, was he perhaps another sibling of the two?

“Well, that’s fine I guess. However, he must undergo a training to be Vincent’s valet. And as to who will we leave that to...”

“I shall see to that milord. I am the one handing the position over after all.”

“That would be good. Well then...”

The Marquess looked at me steadily... I already knew why.

“It’s Rion, sir.”

The Marquess didn’t seem to consider me worth worrying about.

“Well Rion, starting today you are Vincent’s valet. His well-being will now be your responsibility.”

"Yes, sir... Eh?"

How did it end up that way?

Wasn't the conversation about driving me out of the house?

Wouldn't, being a valet, mean that I would be staying here forever?

Why?

Being informed that the discussion was over, I was driven out of the room. But that question kept repeating in my mind while looking at the back of the Marquess and his wife.

Why?

Chapter 4

The First Day Of The Valet!

Full-time valet of Vincent, the eldest son of the Marquess House Windhill.

That was the job given to me.

As for the reason why things turned out this way, no matter how much I thought about it I couldn't come up with an explanation.

It couldn't be helped, I had to ask the guy whom I hated listening to the most.

“Erm...”

“What? Is there something you didn’t understand?”

As opposed to his temperament from a while ago, the man attended me in a gentle manner. Which meant that just being able to let go of his job as Vincent’s valet made him absolutely delighted.

“Just how did things turn out this way? The purpose of the conversation back then was to expel me out of this household, was it not?”

“Oh, that? Just focus on the matters of your job! I want to finish handing it over to you quickly.”

“Erm... Well, I can’t help but wonder.”

“I guess there’s no other choice. At first, it was indeed like that. There is no way we can trust anyone from the slums after all. When one becomes indebted to such people, they think of the person as nothing but a source of income.”

“Well, even though I come from there myself, I agree that there really is nothing but that sort of people back in the slum.”

“Although the demands are usually insignificant, this is a Marquess household, we

must not appear weak. So when they insist on coming back, we have to get rid of them. And if we expect things to lead in that direction, the best course of action is disposing of the problem from the beginning. That's how it is."

Though this guy just smoothly talked about it, what he described was a murder.

I thought of asking if it wouldn't cause a problem, but I figured that it wasn't something I should inquire about. So I stopped myself from voicing the question.

"How did it develop from there into me being young master's Valet?"

"The truth is, disposing of you has already ceased to be an option ever since you've stepped into Ariel-sama's room. The lord and his wife are much more lenient to her compared to Vincent-sama."

In other words, they were doting parents.

I wasn't really trying to make fun of them by thinking that. For someone like me, who lost his parents, it was something to be jealous about.

"If that's the case, why the interrogation earlier?"

"I was opposed to it. Just being Vincent-sama's valet has proven to be difficult, I didn't think I could deal with an orphan from the slums on top of that."

How dared he say that face-to-face with the person involved. As I thought, there was something wrong with this man as a human being. My impression was definitely correct.

"Pardon me for being impolite, but do you have such authority in your role?"

"A full-time valet is a butler to be and can even become one of the aides to the family head. A person having that much of a connection to Vincent-sama, their right to speak will be recognized."

"Eh? Such a position, for me..."

"Not you. As common sense would dictate, it's impossible for someone with doubtful origins to become a close aide of the Marquess."

This guy, there was a limit to being insensitive.

Just how did he pass being the valet of the Marquess' heir?

"...Come to think of it, what was your name?"

"Will. Will Dirk."

"Dirk-san..."

""Dirk-san"? Call me Will-san."

So calling him by given name was the correct way. I should store the simple things like that in my mind carefully.

"Is calling you by "Will-san" really alright? We're going to be future working colleagues..."

"That..., Don't mind it. I hate those kinds of formalities."

"Is that so?"

He was clearly lying, however I couldn't really press the point.

Something was fishy.

This guy would never be in such a good mood otherwise, but I should be able to find out what was up after working in this house for a while.

"Let's resume. At this rate, we will never be done with the handover process."

To summarize the job, Valet was a person in charge of miscellaneous affairs aiming to fulfill all the desires of his master. That is what I was told but, something was not quite right.

I just couldn't imagine Will being able to fulfill all the desires of that obviously self-centered boy.

Though he called it handing over, it was actually quite different to what I imagined. All he taught me was Vincent's schedule for the month.

Other than that, it was his food preferences.

His likes and dislikes in study subjects, but he seemed to like nothing at all.

His magic specialty... it was not even worth talking about.

His attitudes to people...

Why was Will not on the list? Surely, he would've been hated by him.

Anyhow, there was nothing about the job itself.

Though I have heard worrying rumors about Vincent, Will brushed the topic off by saying he was just persistent.

Just as the Valet wanted, the handover finished in the blink of an eye and afterward the bastard immediately fled.

The ones left behind, me and Vincent, started choosing the clothes I was going to wear.

Come to think about it, I had only been wearing sleeping robes all this time. The boy prepared a couple sets of clothing for a valet, but none of them seemed to fit me.

It looked like I had an unusually small build for... Well, I didn't even know my age.

Maybe the reason why no clothes seemed to fit, was because I was yet to reach the proper age for the job. To make up for it, we tried a selection of clothes that he had grown out of.

“How about this one?”

“...I think it's too flashy for a valet.”

“Even this one? Well, you're probably right. A valet's attire must have a muted look.”

Vincent seemed to have gotten the rough idea, but this boy, fussing over how my clothes should be, was quite stubborn.

When choosing his first and foremost concern was based on the idea, that the clothes of his valet had to appear proper.

However, the boy's taste in clothing was really lame.

Though it might have been proper this world, for me it was just a bunch of clothes that I would never be able to endure wearing. No matter what I tried on, I was not able to find a thing I could agree with.

Finally, when I thought of giving up, I stumbled upon a suit in the corner of the closet larger than my room. It was different than the usual, monochromatic black, and gave out a composed feeling.

"Is this one alright?"

"Hmm?"

The boy shifted his attention to the clothes I presented. His facial expression became cloudy. It seemed he was not fond of it.

"These are clothes of a knight."

"Clothes of a knight?"

"Knights wear clothes like those."

"No, I get that. Does that pose a problem?"

"You're going to be a valet, not a knight."

"...Ah, that is correct."

This stubbornness might prove to be more difficult than I imagined. However, I couldn't just pull back when it came to this because I'd rather die than wear a frilly shirt and short pants.

"However, I am Vincent-sama's valet, so won't there be times where I will have to protect you?"

"...That is correct."

"Someone, who protects his master, is not dissimilar to a knight. Although the occupation might differ, as far as duty goes, they are the same."

“...Mhm.”

“That’s why for person given the job of a full-time valet, wearing the attire of a knight shouldn’t pose a problem.”

“...That should be fine. Very well, let’s use this as your uniform.”

“Thank you.”

Persuasion successful! I immediately turned my back to the closet and changed my clothes.

Though I’ve heard it was clothing that knights wore, it felt just like an altered gakuran with a higher collar and slightly longer coat. Though I had said it was monochromatic black, there was some silver embroidery on parts of it.

After putting it on and checking the result in the mirror, it seemed to fit me better than I expected.

That lead to the question of why was only this set of clothes like this? Was it the difference between the attire of knights and aristocrats?

While I was occupied with that thought, the boy got out of the closet and looked at me astonished.

“...Does it look strange?”

“No, it’s the opposite. It suits you well.”

“I’m grateful for that. It’s because this knight’s garb looks good.”

“...You look like the black knight.”

“Yes?”

“Do you not know about it? It’s the protagonist of the book I have read since childhood. Black hair and eyes, the clothes he wore were of the same color. He was a hero who came from another world long ago. Your clothing was made to imitate the one worn by the black knight on the illustrations in that book.”

“I see.”

I wonder if that person had been Japanese. If that was the case, I wasn’t the only one in this world who came from another world. But even so, If it was really a black-haired and black-eyed Japanese then the way he was sent to this world was different from mine.

It seemed like this was an “everything goes” kind of world.

“Do you know how to use a sword?”

“Not at all...”

“Is that so? Then you will take lessons with me.”

“Eh?”

“Do you not know my schedule?”

“No, I do. You have a fencing practice three times a week. Is it about that?”

I learned that this world had a six day week when I was being taught Vincent’s schedule. The days were tied to elements like in Japan, but there was no equivalent to Friday, and Thursday was the day of the wind.

The days were composed of Sun, Moon and the four elements. Truly easy to understand.

“You’ll participate in those fencing practices.”

“Won’t I be in the way?”

I would really be delighted to be taught the sword. However, me being able to join or not, was not within my discretion.

“It’s for the sake of protecting me properly so naturally you should work on your skills in the sword.”

This was my reasoning from earlier. Well, that was fine

“I understand. I shall do as you say.”

With this, I would be able to take fencing lessons as well, but the swordsmanship matter was yet to be settled.

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Learning about his schedule, my impression of the boy changed.

It was quite a busy schedule after all.

Every day, he was taught academic subjects by the live-in tutor throughout the morning and magic in the early afternoon. Late afternoon was taken by fencing class half of the week and learning social skills like etiquette in the other half.

His whole day was filled with studying.

When I first saw his schedule, I thought that it should really be that busy because he was the heir of the House. However, witnessing his classes by myself, I was filled with feelings of sympathy.

“I did not understand, because your way of teaching is poor.”

“I apologize for that, but if the one I am teaching is not interested in learning, then there is nothing I can do.”

“Are you saying that I’m at fault?”

“I was merely saying that we should both work harder.”

The boy with poor grades only shifted the blame on his tutor. The tutor was pushing it right back.

His name was Harvey Moore and he was a little different from the other servants.

I learned the reason immediately.

Although he was a live-in tutor, he was capable of doing many other jobs, so the family

was reluctant to fire him. This was why he could behave in a much more carefree way than the people who came from established families of servants.

Was that carefree way of speaking by him rude?

Just looking at the lesson, one would understand.

Because teaching the boy on its own was difficult.

It looked like Vincent was quite an idiot.

“I am working hard.”

“Is that really the case?”

“What?”

“If you listened to me properly, you would be able to understand what I am teaching right away. Being unable to do so only means that you haven’t been paying attention.”

“...That’s not true at all!”

“Sadly, that’s how it is.”

“Why do you say so?”

“Because even the person sitting at the far end of the room was able to understand it.”

“What!?”

“Eh?”

This was the worst possible development here.

I wanted them to stop shifting the talk towards me.

I understood it indeed, however, not because I was listening carefully but because I was already taught the subject long ago.

“Is that true?”

“That is...”

“Not answering is the answer in itself. He does so due to his consideration of Vincent-sama.”

The tutor was driving me into a corner even more. Just what the heck was he planning?

“...Well then. Rion. Have a look at this problem.”

“Ah no, that is...”

“If you do not solve it, you’ll be punished with the loss of dinner”

Vincent took this matter seriously. This ordeal turned into a choice between being envied or not having dinner.

“I understand.”

I wasn’t able to win against my appetite.

While sitting on the chair I assessed the problem presented to me. It was about the multiplication and division of fractions. As expected, I could answer this much.

I picked up the pen which was harder to use than solving the problem itself. I wasn’t used to pens that needed dipping in ink every single time but I was able to write a solution even though the resulting characters were messy.

“...Have you taken arithmetic lessons before?”

“Just a little bit, from my parents.”

“But I heard you were an orphan?”

“I was taught before they died.”

“...The dwellers of slums teaching their children?”

“I would not know whether this is usual or not. I was only able to remember the things that I thought useful to get out of the slums.”

“Well that is justified. However, to think you could do mental arithmetic...”

It seems that I had really done it now. Multiplication and division of fractions are just simple problems, however, I have overdone things by solving them with mental arithmetic.

I shouldn't have done it considering the level of education of this world... No, considering my apparent age.

And Vincent's reaction was.....

“As expected of my full-time valet. Alright, you must study with me from now on. Teacher, that is fine, right?”

“Eee, of course.”

Not even tinged with jealousy, he was actually happy about it.

Was he a fool or a sage, I just didn't understand him anymore.

What I was sure of, though, was that it was too early to write him off as nothing but a selfish spoiled brat.

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After the lunch finished, it was the time for afternoon classes.

This time, it was fencing. The one teaching us was the captain of the Marquess' knight squad in the capital, Eric Marvin. Because my position was also one of the students and Vincent was stubborn about it, he told me to call Eric “mentor” instead of “knight captain”.

Since this was fencing, as expected it would not result in the same thing as what happened to arithmetic.

I have practiced neither fencing nor kendo and it was already decided what a complete beginner like me should do at first.

Practice swings, nothing but practice swings.

Mr. Marvin, who was at the boy's side, looked at Vincent who was wholeheartedly swinging his sword.

It was way past the thing called practice swinging.

The footwork, the movement of his ankles and knees, the adjustment of his center of gravity by moving his hip and lower back, the smooth swings of his arms in the space of one breath without defiance.

I was told to do the same thing but, I couldn't understand what was happening let alone execute the action. Our Mentor's explanation was that the correct way to swing a sword required the use of not just your arms but your whole body.

Keeping that in mind, I practiced swinging while being conscious of my body movements.

I kept on earnestly doing that the entire time. Or so I'd like to say, but me back then still couldn't keep it up.

When I ran out of breath, I wasn't able to lift my arms any longer. I understood the limits of my stamina with this fencing lesson. I needed to create time for myself to train my endurance.

Like this, I was able to formulate my own schedule little by little.

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After the fencing lesson, it was time for an afternoon nap.

Of course, that was Vincent's schedule, someone like me would not be granted rest.

Having said that, someone like me who only recently became a full-time valet had nothing to do during his free time and, as if she anticipated that, the ojou-sama arrived.

"Rion, you are free, am I correct?"

"Yes, milady."

"Well then, accompany me."

“Where to?”

“My class begins now. You should study with me as well.”

“...Understood.”

Though I did not know what the subject was, learning was a good thing nonetheless. No matter how much I wanted to study in my former world, I was not able to do so. The other me had never been able to study.

Just being born poor robbed one of his prospects.

I immediately remembered that phrase.

“Mayers-sensei, I have brought Rion along with me.”

“Ohh, so that’s him.”

As though she had refused before, Mayers-sensei was clearly not very happy with my arrival. Giving off a strict vibe, she seemed to be very fitting for her job as a tutor of a noble’s daughter. She really fit what I imagined her to be although it was an image that I selfishly imposed.

“Well then sensei, I am pleased to be in your care.”

“Of course, Ariel-sama. I’m pleased to be in your care as well.”

“...What’s with that look?”

As I stood there stiff from surprise due to her sudden application of proper decorum, the ojou-sama looked at me with displeasure.

Now this was the Ariel I got used to.

“Ariel-sama, isn’t that behavior unbecoming?”

“...Oh my, I have shown you my embarrassing side. I will be more careful from now on.”

Again, it changed to that unexpected... Politeness.

“Erm, may I know what is the subject of this class?”

“Could you not tell by looking? It is the lesson of etiquette.”

“Etiquette? Am I participating as well?”

“You are not only the valet of onii-sama but also my... my...”

It seems she decided that it would be difficult to call me a pet in front of her manners tutor.

“Anyhow, since you are now a person of this household you should learn enough manners to avoid being an embarrassment in the public.”

“...However, I am nothing but a servant...”

“Even if you are just a servant, you are surely going to be someone who will always follow onii-sama’s endeavors and at times mine as well. Do you intend to become an embarrassment for us when that time comes?”

“No, milady.”

“Then you must learn proper etiquette.”

“Understood...”

It was hard to go against this girl even for someone like me with my considerably older mental age. Was it due to the dignity that the aristocrats are born with?

Vincent did not give off such a feeling, though.

“Well then, today we start with dance lessons, don’t we?”

“Yes?”

“That’s exactly why I called you. I require a practice partner to be paired with for the duration, you know?”

“Milady, I know nothing about dancing.”

Though I recalled dancing in my primary school, it was very different from the way it was done here.

"That is fine. After all, it is my first time as well. Well then sensei, let us begin."

In the end, I had to accompany her on the dance floor for an hour. Luckily, it was the first dance class and the steps were pretty simple.

*Steps, to think I would be able to casually use this word.

Afterward, I had to join her in manner lessons too.

Well, I figured it was alright.

However, was this really part of my job as a valet?

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After Ariel's etiquette class was over I came back to Vincent's room.

His magic lessons were next on the schedule.

This would be the only thing that I wouldn't be able to learn.

I stood in the corner of the room in order to not interrupt the boy who was focusing on grasping his mana, just as the magic tutor instructed.

Although this was a magic class, it seemed he wouldn't actually use magic in today's lesson.

According to the tutor, the most important part was to be able to grasp and control your mana properly. In order to invoke a magic, one had to be able to circulate the power properly and allocate the correct amount of it to the spell.

Mastering this mana manipulation would increase one's the precision and effectiveness of magic.

At the time Vincent was practicing that skill.

He was softly whispering the spell aria at times.

It seems the process of spellcasting was divided into three steps, the invocation of magic being the first phase and manifestation of mana dwelling inside one's body the second.

It seemed that this process didn't change regardless of what element one possessed but because its details were very reliant on one's mindscape, the outcome would arrange itself according to that mental image...

In other words, the purpose of the aria was to make mental image creation easier on the individual. With enough practice, one should be able to use spells even without chanting.

"I shall bestow magic upon thee"

This is the second time I heard that phrase.

Naturally, this would change the effectiveness of magic. For some reason, it affected the circulation of mana inside one's body.

But I felt something was wrong.

Actual circulation did not follow my mental picture.

"Blessed wind, come and heal!"

In the third phase, the elements to be used had to be established. In this case, after imbuing the mana with wind attribute it turned into a healing magic. Sensei said that would then induce the mana residing in one's body and the will of the world to act accordingly... But where exactly did the world take action?

It had no part in the chanting of the aria neither on the mana manifestation part. My former world's knowledge of fantasy genres suggested that this explanation somehow mixed up the spirit and elemental magic.

Well, that knowledge was rather crude.

Maybe I should have read more light novels before.

The will of the world and the four attributes, if those were spirits then did they manifest when one invoked magic? I looked around relentlessly but there was no trace

of them.

Maybe it really was impossible for me to use magic after all.

If that was the case I could only raise my fighting prowess through the sword. I could not remain like this forever so I began to focus on my future.

I decided not to care anymore no matter what people said. I had to properly obtain the power I need to live in this world.

I would put all my strength into training, with the same application as those fantasy protagonists.

I swore that from the bottom of my heart.

Chapter 5

I Have Gotten Considerably Used To My Livelihood

It had been three months since the day I was hired by House Windhill and I got quite used to the life here.

I kept waking up before dawn and forging my body every day. Because the work day of this household was starting early and all the employees were waking up together with the sun to begin their duties, I had to get up before them to create time for myself.

I ran around the outrageously huge courtyard and trained my muscles through numerous push ups and sit ups.

I began doing this before every dawn.

After the sunrise, my job as a valet was starting but I hardly had anything to do. The only things that the former valet, Will, told me, other than routine duties, would be how to interact with other families.

It seemed that the preparations for a tea party to be held at our own mansion, including preparing invitations for the chosen guests and confirming their attendance was quite a bit of work.

Other than that, there was also the job of vetting the requests to attend and deciding who was supposed to be accepted and who should be refused. It seemed grasping the relationship with other families, examining who would participate, coming up with a decision and comprehending their circumstances was quite a troublesome work as well.

However, at that moment those kinds of tasks had yet to come.

Vincent-sama still being a child was not the reason.

When it came to aristocratic families, I heard that it was common to drag some of their children to social occasions. In the first place, the latest age for someone to hold a ceremony of adulthood, in this world, would be sixteen and I also heard of those who

reached adulthood pretty fast at the age of twelve.

It was similar to the male coming of age ceremonies that the higher echelons of the other world held in the past.

Vincent-sama was only ten years old and adulthood should still be far off, however, it seemed, that by the age of twelve he would attend school. With that in mind, it would be better to start socializing with people of the same generation in other families now.

And yet... There was not a single invitation.

Even though there should be a lot of families desiring interaction with the House of Marquess Windhill.

Why was it like that? There was no one willing to give me a precise answer. Thinking that there must have been a reason why they refused to tell me, I gave up on investigating, as I should be able to find out sooner or later anyway.

Instead of worrying about that, I would cherish the time I made for myself to the fullest. To elaborate, I was practicing how to read.

It seemed that the characters of this world differed from Japanese. After writing my name I could see them as nothing but scribble. They were called letters.

When I became aware of that problem, my future turned bleak. I expected that not being able to write would be a fatal flaw for a valet.

But luckily, somehow, I can read. My eyes would recognise what was written in front of me in Japanese. However, I still could not write and that was a huge problem. Writing on behalf of someone belonged to the tasks that a valet would perform often and not being able to do something like that would disqualify me for the role.

I had to learn how to write the letters at all cost.

Although they were Japanese characters no matter how I looked at them, in reality, these letters should have a different shape. I thought such a thing impossible but the reason that made it occur was my peculiar existence.

(EN: Personality switch.)

When I took the reins of the body, the characters written were not in his language but in letters of this world. But since I could neither read nor write, I did not know what they meant. I could only recognize the shapes.

But that was enough. The other me could understand what was written. I would perceive the shape of the characters and write them. He would comprehend the meaning behind the words and in turn after learning the meaning of what was written, I would remember how to read the letters.

I commended my other self who only thought "How dare you" in return.

(*EN: Back to Ryou)

The study session started to show results. The characters on the pages of the book I was using for practice were now jumbled between Nihongo and the letters of this world. The words that got replaced were the ones I've grown accustomed to.

Although transcribing the text was quite hard at first, I got used to it by then.

Because I was doing this every day, I got used to the quill as well. Even though my handwriting was still shabby, I thought it was slowly turning tidier.

(*EN: Personality switch.)

The road to becoming a full-fledged valet.

Although the goal was still very far off, I had the feeling that I was slowly making progress.

I wondered why was I striving so hard to be diligent in the job? But to tell the truth, I knew the answer. I just could not leave those two egoistic siblings.

Although those two caused me plenty of problems, other than them I had no other people that I could trust in this world.

Such a person like me was being treated normally by them. I, who was showered with contempt by my surroundings and had been on the receiving end of harassment, had been taken under their protecting wings.

I, who was nothing but an abnormality and that was not referring just to the heterochromatic pair of eyes. I was way more abnormal than that.

My body had two personalities residing in it and I was starting to feel friction between them. Little by little the distance separating the two personalities was shrinking and they were slowly merging into one. I would become me all the time* and the other guy would become me as well. We would be one and the same.

I felt like I started to become more like an adult and in turn, he felt more like a child.

The one that deduced that the merging began was the other me. I was fine with it. But even if my two personalities fused into one, I would still be far off from being normal.

Both of us understood that.

The other me seemed to have a strong resolve in this. He came from another world so, naturally, he understood that he was far from normal, huh?

However, I was different. I was an orphan from the slums, a powerless existence who could have died at any time.

Just how did I, who was a peculiar being even in that environment, turn out like this? The other me didn't have any idea either.

Would I become someone strong? By that time, would I still be able to stay normal? If I became an existence wielding power, then I wanted to use that strength for the sake of those two.

The other me was quite trustworthy. Saying that this body belongs to me, he always passed its reins to myself. After thinking through his past actions, I understood that even despite knowing that I should have died, he still sincerely handed the body over to what looked like an afterimage of my consciousness. It was my first time meeting such a human being.

The way we met was strange, though, because he was a part of myself after all. I was my other self as well. Anyhow, the other me was trustworthy. I needed his earnestness to suppress the lingering hate in my heart.

So that I could keep the happiness that I was holding back then.

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It was 4 o'clock. Vincent-sama should be waking up around 8am.

Originally getting him awake was the job of the maids but because it was really difficult and they didn't want to deal with it anymore, it was forced on me before I knew.

Normally, Vincent's personal maid would be in front of the room waiting for me but...

"Why is there no coffee!?"

"Erm... Sir..."

"Why did you even wake me up without making coffee that would fight off my drowsiness!?"

I could hear shouting from inside the room. It appeared that the maid tried to wake him up on her own. Though it didn't really matter for me, if they tried doing it, I would like them to do it properly.

Sighing quietly, I turned and jogged back the way I came from. Knowing why she had such a hard time I felt quite guilty about the maid but, for a bit, I decided to endure it. After all, because of her, I had to think of a method to calm the boy down.

By the time I got back, Vincent became calmer.

However, his complaints did not cease. Shouldn't he channel that persistence to more productive pursuits? With such thoughts in my mind, I entered the room.

Passing beside the bed, I opened the curtains and let the sunlight enter through the window. Since it was the room of the heir, it was facing the sun.

When I turned my head, like I expected, I saw Vincent glaring at me from the bed.

I bowed courteously.

“Good morning, Vincent-sama.”

“Yeah, good morning.”

“Today, I have prepared apple juice for breakfast.”

“...What?”

Hearing my words, his forehead wrinkled indicating he would be difficult about it. Even though I noticed, I thought I must not falter.

“I have prepared an apple juice for breakfast, sir.”

“Why is it not a coffee? It takes plenty of coffee to wake me up, obviously!”

“Yes, sir. I was instructed about that indeed.”

“Then, why not do as you are told? Are you not my personal valet?”

“The truth is, while reading a book yesterday, I discovered something.”

“Discovered?”

“It seems that drinking coffee just after one wakes up is not very healthy.”

“...As if I care about such things. Coffee is obviously the thing for me.”

Even so, it's not like he was particularly fond of coffee. He was just copying his father.

“But sir...”

“What is it now?”

“I read that from King Takemitsu’s anecdote book.”

For Vincent, the only figure surpassing his own father was the third generation king of the Gran Flamm Kingdom, King Takemitsu. He was a ruler who used the country’s military prowess to expand its borders and the one said to have laid down the

foundation of its current state.

“...What?”

“King Takemitsu was a gentleman who looked after his own health.”

“I know that. King Takemitsu was reckless on the battlefield but during the time of peace, he was behaved almost like a coward, treasuring his health. He lived in this manner so he would be able to display his maximum strength in combat because he thought his true worth could only be shown on the battlefield.”

“Takemitsu-ousama was noted to have said that coffee is not very healthy.”

“...And the apple juice?”

“Fruits are good for the body. It seems the sweetness of a fruit can improve the ability of one’s mind.”

These were not the words of King Takemitsu but since we came this far, that didn’t matter.

“Is that so? Well then, the juice is fine.”

“Understood sir. I’ll leave it on the top of the table so please help yourself.”

“Alright.”

Vincent rose from his bed and sat in front of the desk. He had already stopped paying heed to the maid.

With this, I should have accomplished my duty properly.

Using the topic that I prepared for making him rise from his bed for soothing his mood was such a waste, though. It was hard preparing such things to rouse Vincent-sama’s interest every day.

However, I was aware that even if the situation with the maid waking him up didn’t happen, he would throw a tantrum on purpose anyway.

He was doing it with the aim of making people, who were negative towards me staying in the mansion, recognize my worth.

For the sake of returning that goodwill, preparing a conversation for every morning was nothing.

“Well then sir, I will explain the schedule for today.”

“Fumu~”

Vincent, composed, nodded his head. Explaining the schedule, that didn’t change for the better, would complete my work for the morning.

Attending to him while he dressed up was the job of the maid.

Until that was finished, I went to prepare for the morning class in the neighboring room by placing the textbooks, writing tools and sheets of paper on the desks.

Yesterday’s homework was blank as usual. I took the pen into my hand and opened the books at the topics that are within the scope of my understanding.

Around the time I was done, Vincent’s preparations were done as well and he entered the room.

“Are you done?”

“...I have been thinking of waiting until your preparations are finished.”

“The reason why I don’t do my homework is so that you can study. I can do such a thing when I want to, and in fact, I am able to do it before the teacher comes.”

Saying that, he took a seat and grabbed a pen and although he was pretending to be thinking, he only copied my answers.

Doing this, made his argument from before loose persuasive power. Using me as an excuse means he couldn’t think of any other means of persuasion. The “So you can study part” was probably used so that I would not think about it too much.

When we were done, as if he had estimated this, Moore-sensei arrived in the room.

That was the start of the morning study session.

Facing us, sensei checked our answers as he explained yesterday's homework assignments one by one. That was just a review and after we were done with it, we moved on to today's lesson.

Though we were using textbooks, most of the things he discussed were not written down in them. It seemed that the reason was to protect his worth as a teacher. Once I reached that conclusion I thought of stopping Vincent who was eagerly noting the teacher's words.

I didn't have any sheets of paper left, so naturally I had no choice but to focus so that sensei's words didn't pass me by in the corner of the room.

Moore-sensei only directed a question at me once. After that, he completely ignored my existence. I understood the reason from his gaze full of contempt.

There's no mistake that he considered studies to be unnecessary for an orphan valet. When he realised that I was listening carefully, he lowered his voice noticeably. Being hated to that extent might not only be due to being an orphan but also due to my pair of eyes.

Even in this mansion, the attitude of the environment in regards to me did not change. Both in the slums and here I was a subject of hate.

With the exception of those two children.

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After the morning class came lunch.

Because Vincent was going to eat lunch with his family, the assistance was left to the maids. In the meantime, I also had to have my meal.

After taking my food from the kitchen, I returned to my room.

Although there were quarters for servants to eat, I preferred to eat on my own instead because I would just be annoyed by the surrounding glares. It was fine with me because I also had to review the lessons from that morning. I didn't know what would

people say if they saw me studying.

While biting on my bread, I began writing down the things discussed during the morning class on my sheets of paper. Even if those lessons passed me by or were forgotten, if I asked questions to the other me I would be answered most of the time.

Though I didn't know why, for some reason, I had a good memory.

I was fully occupied by eating and writing at the same time. After that, I re-read it all over again and tried to understand the contents. When encountering things I didn't comprehend, I noted them separately for Vincent to ask about them tomorrow.

I can study primarily due to his cooperation.

I had asked him before why was he helping me to this degree. Strangely, I was satisfied with his answer.

"There is no perfect human being. For a human being to stand above others, he must seek someone who would fill what he lacks", that was what he said.

In other words, because he was poor at studying, I had to pile up knowledge in his stead.

I thought his sentiment was correct. Unfortunately, he had too many things that he was lacking in.

At that moment I was the only person to make up for those shortcomings. Until the number of people that could help with that increased, I had to give it my all.

This afternoon was going to be both Vincent and Ariel's etiquette class. Therefore there was no need for me to tag along as a dance partner.

I was going to spend that free period training as usual at the usual place. I took the empty bowls to the kitchen and washed them, then I went to the courtyard.



There was a fountain located in the yard. I circled around it to reach the opposite side.

There was no reason for going to this side other than drawing water. It was concealed

by the shadow of the fountain and was seldom in other people's field of view. At the very least, I couldn't recall being seen ever since I came to the mansion.

But even so, just to make sure I concentrated on my ears to search for people's presence. Although it was possible someone was hiding like me, at the very least there were no signs of people in the surroundings.

While still trying to make sure I was alone, I focused on the sensation within myself. Calming down I put my attention to my sight with particular emphasis on my right eye. Keeping at it, before long, I could faintly see something floating in the vicinity of the fountain.

It has neither color nor shape and yet I could still feel its presence.

It seemed it had also noticed that I was looking in its direction. Those things had consciousness as well and they gathered and floated towards me.

In order to not scare them, I slowly presented my right hand. The shapeless things gathered on it and started slowly to pull and absorb something out of my body.

I could feel their existence gradually getting stronger. After gathering them I conveyed my wish.

I wanted them to become a round ball, they complied. I wished that they take the form of a blade, they acted accordingly.

After that, if I asked they cut the tree branch that stretched out in front of me, the liquid-like blade flew forward and sliced the branch into pieces. Although at that time, I could only cut small and thin branches, I thought that if the things get larger I would be able to have a go at thicker ones.

This was the magic that I came to learn. It was very different from the magic that Vincent was being taught. However my intuition was telling me, or rather, it might not be my intuition but something was telling me...

...That this was the real magic.

Noticing the presence of those things was just by coincidence. Because I was addicted to bathing, I had been sneaking there after dark to stop people from noticing.

When I poured water over my head my left eye was hindered and I had to use my right eye only to see the surroundings of the fountain. I saw those things floating around but, at first, I thought it was just my imagination since after looking at them intently with both eyes, they disappeared.

However, even though I couldn't see them any longer, I could still feel their presence. Thinking that perhaps I could only see them with my right eye, I tried doing it again and they became visible. I tried to watch with my left eye and they were gone again.

They were an existence that could only be seen through blue eyes. So I immediately knew that they were water elemental spirits. I just named them spirits for my own convenience, though, as I didn't really know what they actually were. However, for certain, they possessed a will.

Having a consciousness, they also needed to eat.

Their food obviously was the mana residing in a human's body. Not needing the activation of mana or its circulation, if I let them, the spirits would absorb mana directly within my body and become mine.

Listening to my commands was their way of showing gratitude.

That was the principle behind the magic.

Knowing that, questions began popping up. Why was Vincent's tutor teaching him lies? However, I could not ask them. After all, me being able to use magic would be yet another oddity.

I still didn't have the courage to let others know about that. Although keeping the secret was rather difficult, fortunately, there was someone who could offer me advice and support in such a situation.

Knowing that the established popular belief was wrong should be kept secret for as long as possible. Letting others know should not happen before I acquired enough power to deal with consequences.

Having decided so, I felt the need to desperately polish that ability.

By then, even without closing my other eye, I could feel the presence of the water spirits by just focusing my awareness. Even in places with water other than the

fountain location, I could feel a strong response from them.

If I could start seeing them with no effort, this magic should prove useful.

I began to think I needed to create much more time for myself so I can work on my left eye.

Chapter 6

I Can't Keep Any Secrets From Ojou-sama!

Vincent-sama and Ariel-sama had a sibling named Erwin who was born from a different mother.

I came to know that gradually after three months in the mansion. Although I suspected that this kind of valuable information was kept confidential by default, since I was generally avoided I had to work harder to obtain it.

But to be fair, after I became aware of Erwin-sama's existence, a lot of information regarding him was made known to me. It seemed there was no more merit in continuing to hide it from me.

As was mentioned already, Erwin-sama had a different mother than the siblings. Because their mother, Mirria-sama, was the legal wife that meant the mother of Erwin-sama was a concubine. It looked like her social standing was not very high either.

Because of that, both she and Erwin-sama lived under a cloud of shame. Even now I could tell by her appearance that Mirria-sama had an uncompromising personality. If she was not fond of someone, she would be considerably strict towards them.

Because of that, she didn't want to live under the same roof with a concubine and her child, they had to live at a separate place within the estate.

That was also the reason why it was so hard to notice their existence. The true reason I discovered them was through visitors.

One of those was Viscount Lange Austin. His family was a powerful one even among the vassals of House Windhill.

The purpose of his visit was to try to meet with Erwin-sama of all people. This made Vincent very angry as according to him it was not only impudent, it was akin to declaring that Vincent-sama was lacking as an heir.

I didn't understand how such an action could lead to that outcome, however since the

other servants also believed it to be true, it must have really been the case. I still had much to learn.

Although his action was rude, Viscount Austin had enough power for that to be overlooked and still be granted the visit he desired in the end, despite Mirria-sama walking out in discontent.

Anyhow, that day was the first time I got to fully know about Erwin-sama's existence and was able to see him with my own eyes.

Though, like Vincent-sama, he had blonde hair and green eyes, everything else, including the body shape, was different. If you lined both of them up, the only distinct characteristic, that would indicate they are of the same blood, was their hair and eyes.

Erwin-sama was a surprisingly beautiful boy. Since he didn't resemble Ariel-sama either, he must have inherited those looks from his mother.

It must have been that way to incite Lord Marquess to lay his hands on another woman despite knowing the strict nature of his wife.

Now Erwin-sama seemed to exceed Vincent-sama not only in appearance but in other things too.

His was better in the sword, had a higher aptitude for studying, better personality, but of all the things he exceeded his half-brother in, the most problematic one was the talent for magic.

When children of the three great Houses reached eight, they underwent a trial to discover the capacity and aptitude of their mana. It was an important ceremony for the families that were pillars of the kingdom.

The leadership of these Houses couldn't be entrusted to someone without talent in magic and to make sure that a suitable child was born, it was their duty to adopt or marry someone who excelled in it.

Anyhow, during that ceremony, Erwin-sama had displayed an outstanding talent.

Vincent-sama's results from two years prior on the other hand... Were as expected from looking at his performance in the magic study class. They were unbecoming of House Windhill heir.

This had brought complicated changes in the family politics. Vassal houses began to wonder aloud whether Erwin-sama wouldn't be a more fitting successor to the title. Most servants in the mansion, although staying quiet on the outside, seemed to agree with that sentiment.

The only people opposed to the notion at the time were the Marquess, his wife, and Ariel-sama.

Especially, the Marchioness, who turned even stricter to Erwin-sama and his mother. Because she was scary, no one dared to question the severity of their treatment.

Viscount Austin in trying to meet Erwin-sama had shown a clear intention to push for his succession.

At that time I understood why was Will so delighted to hand over his position as Vincent-sama's valet. He transferred anticipating that Erwin would be nominated as the new heir.

It seemed I was right thinking the bastard was not a decent person.

But that was fine. Those kinds of things didn't matter to me. The only question was what Vincent-sama wished for and as a valet, I would do my utmost to make it a reality.

Well, that was how it should have been but—

“Do something about it!”

“Do something, milady?”

“You are onii-sama’s valet, right? Do you think it is fine to leave things as they are?”

Having answered Ariel-sama’s call, I was suddenly faced with her anger.

“...Is this, perhaps, about the succession issue?”

“Do you know of any other pressing matters?”

“Milady, I have no authority to intervene.”

“But a good valet is someone to take action even knowing that!!”

I thought that personal servants couldn't really do anything about these kinds of situations but Ariel-sama was unlikely to accept that even if I said it out loud.

"Milady, when you say take action, what exactly should I do?"

"That is for you to figure out."

"...Is eliminating the rival acceptable?"

"That is a good idea. Make it happen."

Even though I offered a drastic solution on purpose, it was still accepted nonetheless. Ariel-sama probably didn't understand the true weight of my words.

"Erm, the person removed would be your younger brother Erwin-sama though."

"Who else would it be?"

"Eh?"

"What is it?"

"We're talking about your younger brother milady"

"...If he is bringing chaos to the house, then we have no other choice. That is a part of my burden as an aristocrat."

"..."

It looked like she understood after all. It seemed she was not against disposing of her half-brother for the sake of the House. For Ariel-sama, that was one of the responsibilities that fell on a noble.

"So, can you do it?"

"...If an opportunity arises. However, I am not confident that it's possible without being found out."

"Is that so?"

“I’m afraid that the end result would not work in Vincent-sama’s favor.”

“The vassal families might take it badly too.”

“Wouldn’t that also be a problem, milady?”

“It would, wouldn’t it? Let’s put that plan on hold. Do you have any other ideas?”

“...Yes.”

Though I expected that the conversation would be over once the assassination plan was put on hold, it seems I was wrong. This persistence really ran in the blood. It was likely that they inherited it from their mother.

“...For now, Vincent-sama is the official successor, is he not?”

“That is correct.”

“Then, wouldn’t it be better if we refrained from taking drastic measures for the time being? ”

“You mean to leave everything as is!?”

“No milady, that is not what I meant. For now, it would be better to make the surroundings recognize Vincent-sama as worthy of succeeding. In order to make them realize that is the case, we need him to achieve commendable feats.”

“Such as?”

“...Such as serving with distinction during wartime. ”

“To make that happen right away would be impossible.”

“Which is why, currently, we need to work hard to improve Vincent-sama’s abilities.”

“If we do that, when will it be acknowledged?”

“Milady, that...”

When it came to that kind of questioning, Ariel-sama was pretty strict. She would

realize it right away if one made a half-baked response. She considered that to be one of the gravest sins in a servant's conduct and would yell at offenders.

"Don't tell me, you do not know?"

"No milady, that is not the case."

"Well then, when?"

"I expect that the right opportunity would present itself after enrolling to the Academy, however as to what shape will it have, I'm still not quite sure."

I answered using my knowledge of the other world but as I was not confident that the school in both worlds worked the same way, I could be vague.

"...That's right, isn't it? There is also that."

"Am I right that there will be one?"

"That is a matter of course. There will be various exams at fixed intervals. There should also be other various opportunities to show one's abilities as well."

"Well then, before we get to that, Vincent-sama must make a great effort."

"Specifically on what?"

"Ehm..."

"Don't tell me you have no idea?"

How very strict. Even though I was called without prior notice I was being pressed for answers to the end. Well, giving them was a part of my job as well.

"Milady, I do not know if I can manage to have those things implemented."

"What do you mean?"

"There is an urgent need to change Vincent-sama's tutors with the magic teacher being the top priority. Even if I, being ignorant on the subject, was to be asked, I'd tell you that part of his lessons are very odd."

“...If what you say is true, then that is unforgivable.”

Her anger ignited instantly. Insincerity to one’s employers was one of the things that she found unforgivable. Like attempting to trick her with half-baked words.

“Milady, bear in mind that this is just an insight from someone whose knowledge of magic is non-existent.”

“Teachers should teach those who know nothing. For Rion to still know nothing means that this particular tutor is worthless at his job.”

“As I thought then, changing the tutor would be for the better but I worry that it can’t just be done like that.”

“That’s fine. I will take over the task.”

“Milady?”

“I will be teaching onii-sama myself. I am better than him when it comes to magic, so it should be fine.”

“...As you wish.”

Though I felt that the answer to the problem was still far off, this was not something I could object to. It would be better to avoid meddling with Ariel-sama’s feelings for her brother’s well-being.

“Which other tutor?”

“The sword instructor.”

“Eh? In our family, only one or two people can contest with Eric in the realm of swordsmanship.”

“Indeed. Requesting him to be changed might seem impertinent when he’s so talented.”

“Then, why is there a need to replace him?”

“Because he doesn’t understand the struggles of someone without a shred of talent.”

“...That is”

“It might be unkind to say, but I think Vincent-sama doesn’t have any talent for fencing. However, I don’t think that lacking it is an absolute obstacle.”

“...Talent is... No, continue. You’re still to explain in full, am I correct?”

“Yes. If he was compared to Erwin-sama his shortcomings would be obvious. If even I, observing from the sidelines can tell this, then Vincent-sama most likely thinks so as well.”

“...What did you say?”

I provoked her again. I decided to give up on avoiding that at the moment. For Vincent-sama’s circumstances to see actual change, all his problems including mental ones should be addressed, even if criticism was required.

“The person teaching Vincent-sama should be more honest. How should I put it... That person must have the gentleness that could coax out skill from within another person.”

“...That’s right, I guess? What’s next?”

“In regards to the academic subjects....., Vincent-sama’s motivation poses a problem.”

“...That’s the most difficult part, isn’t it?”

“Yes milady... I am planning to figure out remedies for that.”

So even Ariel-sama was aware of that, huh? It was hard to think of any methods to change Vincent-sama’s hate for studying.

“In regards to that, I shall think of a way as well. For the time being, I will participate in your plan too.”

“Milady?”

“I said, I will study alongside Onii-sama for now.”

“...Understood.”

Other than presenting options to solve Vincent-sama's problem, I didn't have any more say in the matter. Though even if I had, I wouldn't.

Several days later, I was reminded just who the most influential person in this mansion was.

◊ ◊ ◊

The morning study session. Beside Vincent-sama, Ariel-sama also took the tutor's class.

"Onii-sama, how do you plan to explain this?"

"Nn? This is... Rion, explain it in an easily understandable way."

"Milord?"

"I'm afraid my explanations would be too hard for Ariel to take in, but you should be able to frame it in a more understandable way."

"I should?..."

"That's fine. Then let us hear it from Rion himself."

Moore-sensei turned his head towards us but Ariel-sama agreed while ignoring him completely. I was left with no choice but to comply. If I made mistakes on some parts, I would just ask for forgiveness.

"Alright. In order for one to obtain a profit, the selling price of a good must be higher than its cost."

"That is obvious."

"Then what determines whether the product's selling price is expensive or not?"

"...That would be the selling price."

"Then is a bread being sold for two copper coins expensive or cheap?"

"That is cheap, isn't it?"

“...Ehmm... It’s actually expensive.”

“Eh? I have yet to see one but copper would be one of those cheap coins, wouldn’t it?”

Rather, you never even handled money, right? By the way, although Vincent-sama had visited shops himself, he had never been informed of things like “prices”. Honestly, I didn’t even know how many times I was tempted to pocket the outlay for myself.

“...Erm, you see, for me, two pieces of copper coin for a loaf of bread would be too expensive.”

“Rion, are your wages that low?”

“...No, I have nothing to spend money on so what I earn is plenty for now... Umm, let me rephrase it. When I was still residing in the slums, two coppers would be unobtainable and was a great deal of money.”

“Is that so...?”

The expression of Ariel-sama became clouded. She was really honest when it came to things like this. However, at that moment it wouldn’t do.

“Milady, there is no need for sympathy. I only said it for the sake of explanation.”

“That is right, isn’t it?”

“However, Ariel-sama said that it was cheap. Now then, is the loaf cheap or expensive?”

“...Ohh?”

(*TN: *The usual ojou-sama “Ara?” that brings music to my ears. What? Nothing! I just really want to say it.*)

“This is why what determines if something is expensive is the buyer and not the price. Let’s return to our example. Two coppers for a loaf of bread would be expensive, however, if there were people willing to buy it for three coppers later, if you bought one and then sell it to them, you would obtain profit.”

“That’s right.”

“This is called determining the value of goods by demand.”

“So the prices will be decided according to the buyer’s side, right?”

“If one were to put it simply, yes.”

“Well then, explain it easily.”

“...Yes. Next concept would be determining the value of a product through supply. Let’s assume you decided to sell bread for three coppers per loaf, if there are no willing buyers then it won’t sell. Do you know why?”

“Eh? There is a reason for this?”

“There is. If the product it is not a necessity, then it will not be bought. The potential buyers would likely be able to get a hold of it for a cheaper price or even make it themselves.”

“...Indeed”

“So, if people do not have a way to get a loaf of bread for two coppers nor the means to make it at home, what would happen then?”

“Well, we will be able to sell ours for three coppers.”

“Yes. It might even be possible to sell it for four coppers. If we refused to sell and they had no other means to get it, then even if the price was raised higher, it might still find buyers. This is how the prices are determined by the supply.”

“However, that would be despicable.”

“The main goal of merchants is profit.”

“But even so...”

“Don’t worry, milady. There’s more to the subject. A merchant that takes advantage of others by racking up prices loses credibility. Even if he gains profit in the moment, he will lose much more in the long term. It would eventually wipe out all his profits and more.”

Adding this part was not strictly necessary. However, because Ariel-sama wouldn't be able to accept such a ruthless way of gaining profits, if such a caveat was not added, then she would not let the subject drop.

"...That's right, isn't it? With this, it would be acceptable."

"That sums up the topic, was the explanation clear?"

"Yes. It was."

Though I did not think that they were able to fully understand the issues with my explanation, for Ariel-sama it was alright. This kind of knowledge is not necessary for her after all. I wished Vincent-sama took it in properly, though.

He was looking at his textbook with a rather displeased expression.

"...Is that so. So that's how it is."

"Eh?"

"Ah, no, yes, that was a splendid explanation. It was even understandable for Ariel, was it not?"

"Yes, onii-sama."

Though I was also surprised that he was able to understand my explanation, this must have been what Ariel-sama was really aiming for, having us study together, to have me explain things.

Perhaps even more surprising than this was the notion that struck me suddenly, was Ariel-sama always so outrageously bright?

If that was the case, then I didn't have an eye for people but I should not feel sorry for myself.

The surprises about Ariel-sama didn't end with just that.

When it came to magic, she was unmistakably a genius.

The attribute of Ariel-sama's magic was obviously wind. After seeing the spirits, that

were supposed to be invisible to me, spread all around her and shine, it was painfully obvious.

And leaving her affinity aside and just judging by the number of spirits gathering in her surroundings, I wondered just how much mana they received from her?

What amazed me was that she was able to keep such a state stable.

“Do you understand, onii-sama? It is done by feeling the mana in your surroundings, not by feeling the mana inside your body.”

“...That is what you said but...”

“Can you see the mana flowing around me?”

“Y-Yeah. That is amazing, Ari.”

Ariel-sama’s enthusiastic approach to teaching seemed to be having a counter-productive effect, though. Clearly, Vincent-sama was just being oppressed by the reality of how inferior his talent was.

“Onii-sama should be able to do a thing like this. Your way of doing it until now was just wrong.”

“But...”

“The mana circulating around me is a thing that also exists elsewhere, please try to feel it.”

“The same exists... I can’t see them.”

“There is no way that’s the case. They should be visible to onii-sama as well.”

Maybe this way of teaching was because she was a genius. Since she was able to do it easily, she did not know the right way of explaining to others how they can do it themselves.

“...Milord, Please focus your consciousness on your eyes.”

“Eh?”

"Ah, the conversation was about seeing, so I thought focusing on eyes would be important."

"...That is indeed correct."

"Accordingly, if what you were trying to see was wind attribute, I think having a proper mental image of the wind could also help. Should I open the window to let some fresh air enter?"

"...Is it that simple?"

"It was just a suggestion from an outsider, please excuse the boldness."

"...Just do the things you were thinking of doing."

"Well then, I shall open the window."

I walked towards the window and opened it. The breeze that entered from the outside felt pleasant. Would he be able to see them after feeling this?

Vincent-sama turned his gaze towards the window. So he was truly obedient when it came to being taught by his sister. Though I could show him the method I figured out for myself because we have different attributes, it might not have been of much help.

Also, I knew that it wouldn't be enough just with this.

"...Ariel-sama."

"What is it?"

"Please, withdraw your mana for a moment. If they gather too much on you, there won't be much left for Vincent-sama to see."

"You..."

The color of her face changed and I immediately knew that I made a blunder.

"You can see them, don't you!?"

"I CAN SEE THEM!!"

““Eh?”“

“I can see them. O-oh! What is this? They are getting closer.”

“That is it. That’s the mana that exists in the environment. Stay as you are and this time, hold out your hands and focus the mana in your body towards them.”

“It’s the circulation for activation of magic.”

Vincent-sama like the usual, focused and began chanting. I started to see a faint light forming on his palm. It was probably the spirits showing joy after obtaining their food.

“What’s after this?”

“If you continue the chant to the end, the magic should activate.”

“So what’s the difference from the usual method?”

“That aside, I’m surprised you were able to use magic despite not knowing the source. The source of the magic was the mana gathering in onii-sama’s palm, didn’t onii-sama know?”

“Then what about the mana inside my body?”

“Isn’t it for the sake of attracting them?”

“Is that really the case?”

“That is right, The larger the spell you want to use, the more mana it will gather. That’s how the efficiency changes.”

“Is that so?”

Finally being made aware of these things, Vincent-sama’s magical ability was sure to rise. As Ariel-sama said, I was also way more surprised by the fact that he was able to use magic somehow.

Anyhow, it was amazing. I felt like his potential skyrocketed instantly thanks to his sister.

However, that Ariel-sama was looking in my direction with a severe glare.

“...Milady?”

“Rion, you can use magic, can you not!?”

“...No, I can’t.”

“You lie! How come you can see my mana in that case!?”

“That’s because...”

It seemed the spirits were not a thing that could be seen by just anyone. I made a blunder due to ignorance even though I was being so careful...

“So you can now lie to me?”

“Ah, no...”

“You lied, didn’t you?”

“Milady, my deepest apologies.”

“What attributes can you use?”

“...Water only.”

“What attributes can you use?”

“...And just a little bit of fire too.”

“EEH!?”

The one who yelled in surprise was Vincent-sama. Ariel-sama looked like she was satisfied with my answer. The reason why she was persistent was probably because she deduced this far already.

“...Who else knows about this?”

“Only the two of you.”

“Well then, keep it that way. Do not tell anybody.”

“Yes milady.”

“Even you, onii-sama.”

“Understood.”

My only secret was immediately found out by the two of them. Though I worried about what that could lead into, I felt relieved at the same time.

I didn't want to hide secrets. However, the other me, as expected, didn't want it to be exposed, even if people would not believe it anyway.

But even so, the time for it to be revealed would still come either way. I decided to believe in that and wait for that moment as well. After all, my life here had just begun.

Chapter 7

I Have Matured A Bit– No A Lot

The room was still dark. But even not having a watch, I knew that it was about the time for people to wake up. But before that, I had to get rid of hindrances.

“...It’s already morning. Please wake up.”

“...N...”

“It’s morning.”

“...Already? Isn’t it still dark?”

With her body jolting, the woman sleeping beside me had finally woken up.

“Wouldn’t it be bad if everyone else woke up before you? “

“That’s right, isn’t it? Thank you for waking me up.”

The woman rose from the bed while still rubbing her sleepy-looking eyes. I could only see that stark naked appearance of her as nothing, but vile.

Although the outward looks of the servants in the mansion were good, being a factor in the selection, for me, things like appearances didn’t mean a thing.

A woman who sneaked into the room of an adolescent boy was nothing, but foul.

“You really... Even though you’re just a kid, you’re quite good. I will accompany you again.”

She said with a smile floating on her face. Although she acted as if she was the one doing a favor, the words she said didn’t make me happy at all. However, if needed, I would still accompany her. But, it was time to make her realize that the one having pleasure, was only her.

“Yes. However, Ariel-sama won’t let this kind of thing off the hook.”

“...Eh?”

The color of her face immediately changed. No matter how many times I saw it, this part was really amusing. No matter which woman, their response was the same sort of stupid expression.

“Because Ariel-sama is fastidious, she is strict in these kinds of things.”

“You are planning to talk about it!?”

“If I hide it, it will make things more complicated.”

“...That’s a joke, isn’t it?”

“I am being serious. I can never hide anything from neither Vincent-sama nor Ariel-sama.”

Except for one thing.

“...You really are lying, aren’t you? You’re only doing this to shake me up.”

“No, It’s the truth.”

“...Please don’t, if you do such a thing then I...”

Finally, the behavior of the person changed into a pleading one.

Anyone scowled at by Ariel-sama had no place in this mansion. Just one word from Ariel-sama conveyed to the Lord Marquess meant that being fired would be as good as certain. If you were going to tremble like this, then you shouldn’t have done such a stupid thing in the first place.

“Even you won’t be let off the hook, you know?”

“That’s right, isn’t it? It will probably be the same whipping as the usual. However, my sin only weighs as much as that.”

“Please... I’m begging you, please don’t tell them. I will do anything, I will also let you

sleep with me from now on."

It seemed this woman still didn't fully comprehend her position.

I needed to make it clear for her.

"Let me sleep with you?"

"Eh?"

"Shouldn't it be something like "I'm begging you, please sleep with me!"?"

"Rion?"

"Or should we make it "You can do to me as you please" instead?"

"You..."

"One should be aware of his own situation. Do you know what that means?"

"...You have set me up, haven't you?"

"No way. I haven't really done anything. Haven't you been the one to come to my room at your own convenience? Who haven't cared to listen to what I was saying and then threatened and forced yourself on me?"

"That's right, but..."

"You have been thinking that someone like me would just do as told, right?"

"That is..."

In those last two years, my situation had always been the same. It was not related to how old I was, but rather as long as my appearance didn't change, I would always be hated and at the same time treated as a plaything.

Although I did not even know my exact age, I who was still clearly in the period of childhood, had already been involved with numerous women. Females coming to my room, with their sights on my above average face, were not limited to just one or two.

Thanks to this, my situation has worsened to the point that my distrust of women was pushing up ahead of my distrust of humanity as a whole.

"If you ask me to not inform them, then I could stay silent about it. However, because that would be a serious thing to do and a grave betrayal of Ariel-sama, the price for doing that will not be small."

"...Then the compensation is?"

"Nothing much. Tell me about the people you get acquainted with during your work, that alone will be enough. We can even keep sleeping with each other at like yesterday."

"...Is that really enough?"

"Yes. I would not dare to inconvenience a lady. However, you are not the only girl I'm meeting with right now. It would be troublesome if, in the future, you visited at the same time as one of the others."

"...You are quite the lady killer, eh? Even though you're still a kid, you can make a woman's heart go mad all the same. Your relationships, your responsibility however*."

Because the demand was too light, it seems her composure had returned. Her attitude changed to flattery. Well, I guess this much is fine for today. I can still think of many ways to threaten her anyway.

"I think it would be best for you to return now."

"That's right, isn't it?... When will the next time be?"

"I will contact you. It's to make sure no one else notices of course."

"...I understand. Well then, I will wait for the invitation."

Although she had a rather unsatisfied expression, the woman said nothing more and, after putting on her clothes, left the room. When her footsteps became distant, I have also exited into the hallway.

It was already the time for my training.

With this, I had five people. I finally managed to seize the woman who was assigned to the most important tasks.

If you did not have the absolute support of the Lord and his wife in the succession conflict, it would put you at a great disadvantage. However, that moment was the turning point.

From then on, I would not let any information regarding the mansion's situation escape from my grasp. "One who seizes the information, seizes the battlefield" – I don't know who did that quote come from, but it was from the other world.



Before my training began, I plunged myself completely into the fountain's water.

That was because I wanted to wash the lingering scent of the woman clear off. Just being wrapped around by that scent already gave me an unpleasant feeling.

I poured water on the top of my head over and over again. Though the current season was unpleasantly cold, that didn't matter to me at all. No matter how freezing the water was, it would feel mild to me.

"...Has someone slept with you again?"

My hands pouring water instantly stopped as I heard the voice, that I currently didn't want to hear the most. Timidly turning my head, the person, who should never have appeared in such a place, was currently standing there.

It was Ariel-sama.

"...Good morning milady. This is because I have woken up early."

"Rather, you haven't been able to sleep, right? Due to someone's fault."

"...Milady? That would be?"

I was having a bad feeling. I was really having a bad feeling, that it was probably about that.

"I have came to Rion's room, because there has been something I've been really

curious about."

"...I haven't noticed milady."

"Of course you haven't. You have been in something like a trance after all."

That was not me, but the other one... I should've have thought about making less sound.

"Milady? I wonder what would that have been caused by?"

"Are you trying to make me say it?"

"...Of course not, milady. But I think that coming to my room alone in the middle of the night would not be a conduct becoming an aristocrat's daughter."

"...I know about that."

The face of Ariel-sama turned even more displeased. Just looking at such an expression, brought pain to my chest. However, I still had to inform her about my perspective, because Ariel-sama was important.

"The current situation is not desirable to me either. So if possible milady, do lift your spirits a little bit..."

It seems with this, her patience had finally snapped. Ariel-sama's whip flew towards my hands. Her lash today hurt an awful lot.

Did she fail to control it, or was it on purpose? No, no matter how I thought about it, it was on purpose. There was no one to witness the whipping, so there was no need to whip me seriously.

Our relationship was of the kind where, when we would look to be too close, odd suspicions would arise. The purpose of the whip was to prevent such risk and it was showcased to the surroundings to put an emphasis on the master-servant status.

Ariel-sama was really good at whipping. Even though it was making a really loud sound, there was almost no pain. When I praised her for that, I was told that it was only due to her use of wind magic. Magic was really convenient in various ways.

However, the whipping today was done without restraint.

“...Your orders milady?”

“Do I really need to have a business in order to meet with Rion?”

“...That is not the case at all.”

“In the near future Rion will attend the academy as well, correct? After that, there won’t be much time when we’re together.”

“Yes milady.”

The following spring, I would start to attend the Royal Academy together with Vincent-sama. I was merely tagging as a valet in order to take care of his daily necessities. But even so, the academy had a huge library and there were a lot of books that didn’t exist in this household. The studying environment didn’t matter for a valet, however the library was a great place to learn.

The real problem was that the academy employed a boarding system.

Although it was under the pretext of making the younger nobles more independent, since it was merely for form’s sake, it didn’t mean a thing. This is because all lordlings and little ladies were accompanied by a person taking care of their necessities similar to me.

Knowing that this was the case, I thought it would be better if there was no dormitory system at all, but surely there were circumstances dictating otherwise. I had gotten used to the noble society having inexplicable circumstances.

Anyhow, the time where I could be with Ariel-sama would be limited to my days off. When it came to that... not sparing a thought for such things was no good.

“It’s only natural that I want to spend the same amount of time together, or even just a little more.”

“Ariel-sama, I appreciate the thought, but causing situations where you have to sneak out to meet me...”

“What’s wrong with that!?”

“...Milady is engaged to the Crown Prince. You must not endanger that, no matter how trivial the reasons, nor offer opportunities for other to slander you.”

“...”

The engagement of Ariel-sama and the Crown Prince was formally announced a year ago, but the marriage itself was all but decided even further back.

I had Vincent-sama tell me about the circumstances regarding that.

The relationship between the royal family and the three aristocratic families was complex. One of them being ahead of the other two was neither desirable to the royal family nor the three houses themselves. Each of them would prefer it was their own family who would gain the upper hand instead.

However, such a thing would not be achieved easily. If one of the three started getting ahead, the other two would suppress it back. It was that kind of situation.

Because of that arranging marriages was difficult. Having only one of the three aristocratic families deepen their relationship with the royal family was not desirable. Deepening relationships with the other branches of nobility was not desirable as well because no dynasty wanted another to become equal with their own standings.

Well then, how would all that actually work?

Simply by making the three aristocratic families to take turns.

The wife of the current king was from the House Aqusmea and the queen of the next generation was already decided to come from House Windhill.

Ariel-sama was already determined to be the queen ever since she was born.

Because she herself knew this for ages, she had always done her best to become someone worthy of being the next queen. In addition, it seems the crown prince was also smart, good looking, had excelled for both swordsmanship and magic and was a person of impeccable character.

It would be only natural to be glad about it.

Though it should have been natural, probably because it was an arranged marriage, for some reason Ariel-sama didn't feel glad about it. It might have also been due to the pressure of being the official queen of the next generation. After all, it was a Queen's crown. For a commoner like me, it was an existence way above the clouds.

"Until when do you plan to continue such activities?"

"Yes milady? What would you be referring to?"

"...those women."

"Although I won't increase the number any more, I must still accompany them at times."

"...The woman this time was who, and where is she from?"

"It is a person in charge of distant matters."

I stopped the answer with just the where part. I have already learned from experience that if I told her who, she would treat them in an unfavourable manner after all.

Though I knew that it was an improper relationship, this was all for the sake of Vincent-sama. I also wanted to ask her to consider her actions more, but I could not get it out of my mouth. Especially because Ariel-sama didn't hide her discomfort in regards to this matter.

Which reminded me of the time when Vincent-sama was persistent in a similar case and I told him, which resulted in me and the woman being whipped together.

"What are you laughing at?"

".....Nothing, milady."

It seems I couldn't help but laugh unconsciously, just remembering about it.

"I have heard that you will take a day off."

"...Is that perhaps what milady has been concerned about?"

"Yes. After all, even if you take a day off, you have no other place to go."

“Even I would want to go out to play at times.”

“That’s a lie.”

Ariel-sama flat-out rejected my words. Was she sharp, or what.

“Tell me your real reason. This is an order.”

She used it as if flashing her hidden trump card. Well it was actually effective on me though. I didn’t want to hide anything from them. Or rather, I didn’t want to add anything more to the most important thing I was hiding then.

“...It’s only a bit of cleaning up.”

“Cleaning up?”

“When I go to the Royal Academy, there might be times when those whom I have gotten acquainted with will come for me. Although the chance of it happening is low, I have been thinking that I should remove the potential sources of future trouble.”

“...You are going to the slums, right?”

“Yes milady.”

“What are you going to do there?”

“...A bit of cleaning up, milady.”

“...It’s nothing dangerous, is it?”

“Because it’s the slums, I won’t lie about the dangers involved. However, I will return safely without fail.”

I promised my safe return to the straightforward pair of Ariel-sama’s eyes. The pair of emerald green irises were staring at me and I felt like being pulled inside.

“...I understand. Be careful.”

“Yes milady.”

I bowed deeply towards her departing back.

◇ ◇ ◇

It had been roughly two years since I came to the mansion. I shopped a bit to kill time and after finishing a light meal, I headed towards my objective.

Passing through numerous alleys away from the main street, I moved towards the place where I was raised.

The dark side of the capital, the slums.

Even though so much time had already passed, the state of the neighbourhood hardly changed. Walking in the manner that I had gotten used to, I entered deeper into the alleyways, while avoiding getting dirty.

Although I could feel the stares surrounding me, I knew that it wasn't because people recognized me. Looking at a well-dressed kid, they must have thought that a prey had strayed into this place again. Ignoring the watchers, I went straight towards the place where those bastards should be nesting.

It was a considerably better looking building compared to the average structure of the slum area. They should be gathering on the first floor.

Before, I would never have made myself approach this place and because I was currently about to enter it now, I must have gotten really strong.

As I opened the door, I could hear the voices of the adults making a racket inside. After that, there was a small pause. Seeing my figure enter the building, they have turned silent.

Looking around the surroundings, I immediately found my target.

“...You bastard, how dare you show yourself in here!?”

The guy who exploded in anger approached me. There was another person following him, those two were together as usual.

But then again, years ago, there were three and not actually two.

“It’s Dan’s killer! I’ll butcher him to death!”

Skipping the talking really helped.

The two brandished a pair of blades to threaten me. Though it was quite unsatisfactory, I guess this had to do.

Reaching towards my waist, I drew my sword and everything happened in a flash. Blood suddenly gushed out from the throat of the man in front of me.

“Wha?!”

With no time to be surprised, I faced the other man and swung my sword diagonally downwards. With barely a response, the body of the man immediately fell to the floor.

“...You! What are you trying to pull!?”

Finally realizing what was happening, the other men simultaneously stood up.

“I killed them, because they were trying to kill me.”

“What?!”

“Complaining about this... It seems that the slum denizens have turned quite naive.”

Kill if you didn’t want to be killed. That should have been a common rule here.

“Even so, what are you trying to pull causing an uproar in here of all places.”

I started hearing a deep voice from above the stairs.

“Leader!”

Well, it was really reassuring that talks progressed this fast. If it was like this, I would be done in no time.

“I have been wondering what’s with the uproar. To think it has been you.”

“Do you remember me?”

“Of course I do remember. I can even remember your taste.”

“I remember clearly as well.”

“Is that so? So you came because you couldn’t forget? Then I’ll do you again as you wish, so bare you ass.”

“Like hell that’s the case.”

“Haa, to think that you, who could only quiver in fear before, have become someone to speak so boldly.”

“I have grown quite a bit after all.”

“So? What do you want?”

“I have told you haven’t I? That I can clearly remember everything.”

“Don’t tell me you have come here to kill me? Me of all people? Just where the hell do you think you are?”

“This place? It’s your graveyard. Burneth thee, till not a speck of ash remains – Flame Prison!”

Almost immediately after my words, the body of the man was engulfed in flames.

Not a single fragment of his earlier bravado could be seen now while he rolled his body on the floor screaming.

Doing that would not extinguish the flames. They would only disappear after one was already burned to dust.

“Well then, I wonder who’s next?”

“...Y-you, U-using magic.”

“So it is you?”

“N-No! I haven’t done anything to you!”

“You not doing anything is a lie. I can remember you kicking me sometime in the past.”

“...I-I apologize. Please forgive me.”

“Hmm... Flame Prison!”

“Guaaaaaaaaah!”

Assaulting me from the back was futile. The me right then could easily feel the presences behind my back. Still, it was just the right time to show an example. With this, the talk between us should progress faster.

“If you defy me, I’ll kill you. Then what should you be doing?”

“...Do as we are told.”

“That’s right. Please do. Well then, not wasting time, here are your orders.”

“W-What?”

“Gain complete control of the slums. Exterminate the other influences and subdue all of this region.”

“...That is.”

It seems the guy in front of me didn’t completely understand what I was saying. Ah no, he could understand but couldn’t see how to make this happen.

“I won’t ask you to make it happen immediately. It’s fine if it takes you some time.”

“Even if that’s the case, there’s no way we can simply...”

“I will get rid of the obstacles. If it’s someone who will bow down to money, give them money. However you get there, have all those who reside in the slum area vow allegiance to you.”

“That is really unlike you, Flay.”

So my name was actually Flay. Well, even hearing that, not a single memory resurfaced and I didn't feel a thing. As I thought, the me, who carried the memories of this world, was nothing but an afterimage of a consciousness.

"In regards to this organization – I will seldom come here. As for other things – you can do to as you like to uncooperative inhabitants, after all, you guys will be the group ruling this town."

"...Really?"

Although I was trying to do it by carrot and stick approach, I wondered if it went well. Anyhow, I felt like the faces of the surrounding men have now been tinged with excitement.

"Yeah. I will provide you with necessary funds. Is there someone in charge of finances here?"

"He should be on the second floor."

"Call him down."

"U-Understood."

After waiting for a while, a diligent-looking person, seemingly unfit for this place, was forcibly dragged out. Because he was someone who could calculate, it seems there also were educated people in here.

"Your name?"

"...Mane."

"An alias. Well that's fine. Use this money as you see fit. However, you must record all of your transactions. If I find any falsehoods, I'll turn you into charcoal too."

"...Y-Yes."

Rather than minding my threat, the surrounding people were surprised by the money that I handed over to Mane. Well that was certain to happen. This was an amount of money that commoners wouldn't even be able to fathom. If I told them that that was only a portion of Vincent-sama's pocket money, would they be convinced? After all, he

was not an heir of the Marquess for nothing. Though I wouldn't reveal such a thing to them even if it killed me.

"Although I said that you can do as you please, things that go against my orders are unforgivable. I will come here periodically to check the situation. If, when I arrive here, there's no significant progress, I'll have you all dead. If someone tries to escape, I'll chase him until the end of the world and kill them. Not just that, I will have all those left behind take responsibility and kill them too."

"No way!?"

"Give it up. You have been captured by the worst of all humans. But if things go well, you will be able to live an enjoyable life. Believe it."

"...Understood."

"Don't tell anyone about me unless I permit it, even if someone comes to ask. If you stumble upon me, don't talk to me first, conversation will only begin when I come to talk to you."

"Understood."

"Any questions?"

"...None."

"Well then, I will look forward to results of your great efforts. Wouldn't it be good if this place turned into a decent town?"

With this, the cleanup was over. Although I didn't know if my attempt to put things in order would go well. And even if it did, I didn't know if it would be of any use to me in the future.

But that was fine. I would think of what I could do about it when everything was finished.

"Those who are well-prepared will worry for nothing" – or so they said.



PtFF by: traktorA7EN